

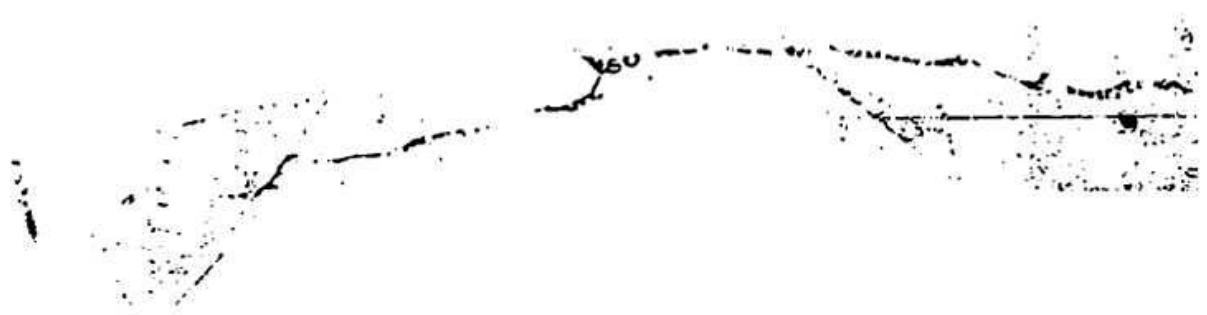
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THE INFLUENCE OF BAUDELAIRE ON ENGLISH LITERATURE

Although Baudelaire was a poet of startling originality, the perspective of a hundred years enables us to see him much more as part of his age. His anti-utilitarian aestheticism he shares with Gautier, his satanism comes from Byron, de Sade and the *roman noir*. Ennui or 'spleen' was an established symptom of the *mal du siècle*, as in René, Obermann, Vigny, even Stendhal: 'Le grand mal de la vie pour moi, c'est l'ennui' (letter from Stendhal to R. Colomb. 4.9.1820). The *frisson nouveau*, which Victor Hugo said that Baudelaire had brought into French literature, had already been pointed out by Hugo himself in Sainte Beuve's *Poésies de Joseph Delorme*: 'You have given a new accent to certain effusions of the soul. Your verses, almost always full of pain, often profound, seek out all those who suffer, whoever they may be, honoured or fallen, good or wicked'.¹ (Hugo replying to Sainte Beuve's speech of reception at the Académie Française) Apart from this sympathy with the fallen, many a sinister unhealthy note in Sainte Beuve's poetry anticipates Baudelaire: sardonic melancholy, *tableaux parisiens* of vice and despondency, disgust with the body and the irremediable evil of physical love, soaring aspiration heavenwards amidst images of filth and decay, or this:

In two sweet eyes I love to see a shifty smile:
A dampened sunbeam.

(Moi, j'aime en deux beaux yeux un sourire un peu louche:
C'est un rayon mouillé.)

Baudelaire's famous 'Carrion' poem was part of the fashionable avant-garde obsession with the repulsive and macabre: his contemporary Prarond imagines his own swollen body being devoured by worms. The

idea of the *public munditi* or elect of the damned was as old as Villon, and made much of in the age of Byron, Kleist, Nerval and others equally alienated if less suicidal. The urge to escape 'anywhere out of the world' he shared with many a Romantic: 'True reality is only in dreams' was a German Romantic idea brought by Mme. de Staël from Wackenroder, Schelling and Novalis, while Baudelaire's conception of imagination in his 1840 Nalon or his 'Nouvelles notes sur Edgar Poe' is fundamentally that formulated by A. W. Schlegel and taken up by Coleridge: 'a semi-divine faculty which penetrates directly, outside philosophical methods, the intimate and secret relations between things'.² From this Baudelaire developed his idea of 'correspondences'. Thus in examining the influence of Baudelaire in England, it is important to see him as part of a complex of current ideas rather than a single dominant influence. For instance, the satanism of Swinburne comes not from Baudelaire but from de Sade, and Oscar Wilde's pursuit of the 'strange' derives as much from Hugo's idea of the 'grotesque' or Huysmans's *A Rebours* as from Baudelaire, even though it is equally characteristic of Baudelaire.

Furthermore, a similar complex of ideas and sentiments was already operating in English literature, subversive as in France, on the fringe of the officially sanctioned Tennysons and Mrs. Gaskells. De Sade is in the tradition of the Gothic Romance, which originated in England with Walpole's *Castle of Otranto*, and included Lewis's *The Monk* and Maturin's *Melmoth the Wanderer*. The Romantics thought Melmoth as great a figure as Faust, and Baudelaire placed Maturin with Byron and Poe as expressing 'the blasphemous side of passion; they have projected splendid dazzling rays on to the latent Lucifer installed in every human heart' ('Art Romantique': essay on Banville). Equally in the Gothic tradition is Poe himself, whom Baudelaire introduced into France and praised for his special genius in depicting the 'grotesque' and the 'horrible' ('l'exception dans l'ordre moral' (in the Preface to his translation of the *Histoires Extraordinaires*). In Poe also Baudelaire found confirmation of 'that great forgotten truth—the primordial perversity of man', which makes of him 'both homicide and suicide, murderer and executioner' thereby combining Romantic self-dramatization with Christian original sin. Baudelaire found more of his favourite convictions in De Quincey, whom he also translated, as had Musset ten years earlier. A striking parallel is in De Quincey's association of the 'horror of life' with the 'celestial sweetness of life'—especially as fixed in the memory of seeing the sun shine into the room where the body of his dead

sister was lying: 'the light of summer and the frost of death'. This corresponds to Baudelaire's obsession with 'the horror and the ecstasy of life', *douceur et poison*.⁴ In De Quincey Baudelaire also found his conviction of the necessity of pain as 'God's most powerful tool', and the idea of the poet singled out for corruption so that he may 'see things which should not be seen, abominable visions and unspeakable secrets'.⁵ If Swinburne received such doctrines from France, he might have found them nearer home, as also his Lady of Pain in De Quincey's visions of Levana. However, the Decadent movement in England was very consciously inspired from France, and its adherents thus received back across the Channel some of the forces which were already active in their own literature. For instance the theme or attitude of *De Profundis Clamavi* may be traced from De Quincey's *Suspiria* through Baudelaire's poem of that name,⁶ and on to Reading jail.

In assessing the influence of Baudelaire on English literature it is hard to disengage him from others who shared specific aspects of his work. In carrying the doctrines of Art for Art's Sake to England, Gautier and Flaubert were probably more influential, and Banville too. Pater's aestheticism probably owed as much to Winckelmann as to France. By his theory of correspondences and insistence on the spirituality of art, Baudelaire is equally associated with the Symbolist movement, along with Villiers de l'Isle-Adam and Mallarmé. At the opposite extreme he was looked upon as a realist, or rather as a naturalist along with Zola and the Goncourts because he wrote of prostitutes, beggars and criminals. Above all he was taken as a satanist, so that Enid Starkie is able to say of Swinburne's *Poems and Ballads* (1866) that they 'crystallized one aspect of French literature, the Baudelairean, which was to last in Britain for more than half a century.'⁷ But is this a fair estimate? In so far as Swinburne was ever considered the English Baudelaire, this merely reveals the extent to which Baudelaire was misunderstood in England. To make this clear we must separate out contradictory aspects of Baudelaire's genius, in particular the satanic, the aesthetic, and the moral. Only then will his true originality, that which separates him from his age, be revealed. There is in fact a progression in Baudelaire from arrogance to humility, most evident in *Mon coeur mis à nu*, towards the end of which he noted: 'Without charity I am but as sounding brass. My humiliations have been acts of mercy from God. Has my phase of egoism ended?'⁸

The fact that Baudelaire at the start of his career set out to shock

can hardly be denied—it was part of his contempt for bourgeois complacency. The section *Révolte* of *Les Fleurs du mal* illustrates this, or more fully the ending of 'A Celle qui est trop gai.' 'Do you take me for a barbarian like yourselves,' he cried against those who condemned the poets he admired, 'and do you think me capable of finding pleasure in the miserable entertainments which satisfy you?'⁹ These he compared to a 'rustle mutton, repugnant with health and virtue' as contrasted with his own taste symbolized in one of those enigmatic artificial *femmes fatales* which dominate the second half of the century. This pursuit of the rare, exotic and mysterious—everything that is abnormal as opposed to contemptible normality—is obviously open to the charge of pursuing the new for its own sake. If virtue was previously admired, now we admire vice, previously kindness now cruelty, previously health now sickness: De Sade replaces Christ, and instead of God we worship the Devil. As Sainte Beuve put it: 'Lamartine took heaven, Victor Hugo took the earth'. We may add: 'and Baudelaire took what was left.' Eighteenth century materialism (e.g. Helvétius¹⁰) had already anticipated this consequence of an art of pure novelty, divorced from morality or any other norms. Baudelaire himself seems to take this stand when he says 'Illustrious poets had for long divided between themselves the most attractive provinces of the poetic domain. It seemed to me amusing, and all the more agreeable because the task was more difficult, to extract the beauty from evil.'¹¹ This note is sounded frequently in his writings: he praises Poe for discovering 'unknown procedures for astonishing the imagination', and even as late as the *Paradis artificiels*, in the moving preface to one who is sick and turning her thoughts towards heaven, he remarks that it is a privilege of the human being 'to be able to draw new and subtle enjoyments even from pain, catastrophe and fate.'¹² Much of Baudelaire's satanism, then, can be attributed to this pursuit of new sensations, new forms of beauty, turning mud into gold ('Tu m'as donné la boue, j'en ai fait de l'or'). Mario Praz places Baudelaire squarely in the shadow of the 'divine marquis', without at all suggesting that Baudelaire's preoccupation with cruelty was any different from that of De Sade. But was this really nothing more than the expression of a perverted personality and the pursuit of a lurid novelty?

Baudelaire, as he himself admitted, is very contradictory. In one place he describes his ideal beauty in the typical language of the *belle dame sans merci*: a 'dream of stone' with a 'heart of snow', impassive, eternal.¹³ But in the *Journaux intimes*: 'It is something ardent and sad,

something a little vague.¹⁴ So too his attitudes to virtue and vice are ambiguous: in reaction against normal (what he calls 'rustic') health and virtue, he seems to express a predilection for cruelty and decay, but in his vindication of artificiality (*Eloge du Maquillage*) he condemns vice and crime as natural.¹⁵ A partial resolution of this contradiction lies in Baudelaire's concept of suffering—*l'indispensable douleur*—which is far more important than his satanism, sadism, dandyism, or any other attitude. Baudelaire is not merely a Romantic idealist in revolt against the imperfections of this world, but a fundamentally spiritual personality who sees the allurements of material happiness and moral complacency as the greatest menace to men's spirituality.] That is why he attacks with such fury *l'Ecole païenne* and *l'Ecole de bon sens*, which seek contentment here below. [His attack on the cult of form is particularly revealing, as it sets him apart not only from the Pagan School but also from any pure aestheticism: 'The excessive pursuit of form leads to monstrous and unknown disorders. Absorbed in the fierce passion for the beautiful, the odd, the pretty, the picturesque, for it has various degrees, the ideas of what is right and true disappear.'¹⁶ This contradicts the whole stand of Gautier's *Art for Art's Sake*, of which Baudelaire is elsewhere, as in his writings on Poe, an uncompromising supporter: 'poetry... cannot be assimilated to science or morality: it does not have truth for an object, but only 'self.'¹⁷ Yet he had condemned the school of good sense for falsifying reality!]

[Not the pursuit of novelty but the reality of evil is the basis of Baudelaire's aesthetic, and the most overwhelming proof of that reality was the impulse to cruelty within ourselves] of which De Sade's writings are the most extreme expression. Only rarely does Baudelaire exhibit Sade's complacency: 'O mon cher Belzébuth, je t'adore!' (*Le Possédé*). Far stronger is the Romantic urge to escape into ideal visions and dreams, to the land where 'tout n'est que ordre et beauté, / Luxe, calme et volupté' (*Invitation au voyage*). 'Ideal' is set against 'Spleen', art against reality, beauty against matter. The poem, as he defines it in 'Notes nouvelles sur Poe' is a revelation of paradise: 'It is both by means of and through poetry, by means of and through music, that the soul half sees the splendours situated beyond the tomb; and when an exquisite poem brings tears to the eyes, these tears are not the proof of an excess of pleasure, they are rather the sign of an irritated melancholy, a solicitation of the nerves, of a nature exiled in the imperfect, which would like to take possession immediately here on this earth, of the paradise revealed.'¹⁸

This is an affective aesthetic theory, but unlike the Symbolists, Baudelaire also insisted that the poem be a reminder of present imperfection—not an escape or consolation, but an exacerbated reminder of the gap between the real and the ideal. It is in the *Paradis artificiels* that he writes 'True reality is only in dreams', but later in the same book 'Any man who does not accept the conditions of life sells his soul.' Evil is to be lived through:

I know that pain is the unique nobility
Neither earth nor hell can ever encroach upon.

(Je sais que la douleur est la noblesse unique
Qu'ni ne mordront jamais la terre et les enfers.—'Bénédiction')

It is this moral attitude which distinguishes Baudelaire from De Sade, who is merely pushing 18th century materialist hedonism (La Mettrie) to its logical conclusion, and from all those who merely sought novel sensations in satanism and other forms of horror. Hence the continual emphasis on remorse: the irremediable, irreparable. That suffering which is man's 'unique nobility' is moral suffering, which purifies:

Blessings on Thee, my God, giver of suffering
As a divine remedy for our impurities.

(Soyez béni, mon Dieu, qui donnez la souffrance
Comme un divin remède à nos impuretés.—'Bénédiction')

This is the source of that profoundly moving quality of Baudelaire's poetry, that solemnity which in English poetry had not been heard since the *Holy Sonnets* of Donne; and which the fin de siècle certainly could not reintroduce:

Pouvons-nous étouffer le vieux, le long Remords...?

Bientôt nous plongerons dans les froides ténèbres;
Adieu, vive clarté de nos étés trop courts!

The intense sadness of Baudelaire's best poetry is quite different from any wan Celtic melancholy, and quite incompatible with any mere aestheticism, any mere dandyism. Yet these were the attitudes with which in England he was associated in the 19th century.

This assertion might seem to be contradicted by the fact that the first article on Baudelaire in England, by Swinburne in *The Spectator* of Sept. 6th 1862, stressed the 'vivid and distinct background of morality'

to every poem of *Les Fleurs du mal*. Baudelaire was even prompted to correct this: 'I am not so much a moralist as you so obligingly pretend to make out.'¹⁹ Here the key word is 'pretend', for Swinburne was really only preparing the ground for publication of his own works, which he rightly anticipated would outrage Victorian prudery. In fact Swinburne's article is mostly concerned with admiration for the satanic and morbid aspects of *Les Fleurs du mal*, and with introducing the theory of art for art's sake into England—precisely the two aspects of French literature with which Baudelaire's name was to be associated till the end of the century. Swinburne's name more than that of any other English author has been linked with Baudelaire's, yet the similarity relates only to the superficial aspects of Baudelaire's work. There is nothing of Baudelaire's intense seriousness in Swinburne: an element of boyish frivolity runs through his life of the kind one associates with an Eton-Oxford upbringing. Contrast any of his portraits with those of Baudelaire and the puckish mischievous air is apparent. All that facetious hilarity at Oxford with the Pre-Raphaelites, the childish obscenities and Bohemian sprees, the Cannibal Club . . . all that schoolboy hero-worship of Landor, Mazzini, Hugo, and others. The antics and milieu are much like those of Ginsberg and his circle in our own day—Swinburne's habit of walking about the house naked, or Richard Burton sitting cross-legged on a cushion reciting alternately in Persian and English and chanting the call to prayer. Not for nothing did Henry Adams call Swinburne 'a cross between the Devil and the Duke of Argyll'.

This playful exhibitionism passes over into the poetry. The attitude is well illustrated by his comments while writing 'Dolores': 'I have added yet four more jets of boiling and gushing infamy to the perennial and poisonous fountain of 'Dolores'. *O mon ami!*' This was in a letter to Howell, followed by a postscript: 'Since writing the above I have added ten verses to 'Dolores'—très infâmes et très-bien tournés. Oh! Monsieur, peut-on prendre du plaisir à de telles horreurs?' This particular poem offers obvious comparison with those Baudelaire wrote for Jeanne Duval, with 'Les métamorphoses du vampire' or 'A une madone'. But the contrast between Baudelaire's tortuous alexandrines and the facile lilting flow of Swinburne's fifty five stanzas makes of one a vision of horror, of the other a literary joke:

Baudelaire: La femme cependant, de sa bouche de fraise,
En se tordant ainsi qu'un serpent sur la braise,

Il pétrissait ses seins sur le fer de son busc,
 Lâchant couler ces mots tout imprégnés de musc:
 'Moi, j'ai la lèvre humide, et je sais la science
 De perdre au fond d'un lit l'antique conscience.
 Je sèche tous les pleurs sur mes seins triomphants
 Et fais rire les vieux du rire des enfants.
 ('Les métamorphoses du vampire')

Autoburne O lips full of lust and of laughter,
 Curled snakes that are fed from my breast,
 Bite hard, lest remembrance come after
 And press with new lips where you pressed.
 For my heart too springs up at the pressure,
 Mine eyelids too moisten and burn;
 Ah, feed me and fill me with pleasure,
 Ere pain come in turn.
 ('Dolores')

Other themes in common between *Les Fleurs du mal* and *Poems and Ballads* include lesbianism, blasphemy, vivid physical sensuality, love of the subtle, strange and artificial, morbid obsession with disease and decay, the weariness of exhausted sensuality, barren love ('the burden of bought bliss'), imagery of poison and blood, snakes and flowers, plus a general attitude of weary despair. Swinburne's love for the sea may be compared with Baudelaire's frequent sea imagery: each imagine themselves possessed by or merging with the sea.²⁰ The theme that Swinburne most shares with Baudelaire, that recurs in poem after poem, is that of pleasure in pain, the merciless beloved:

The bright fine lips so cruelly curled,
 And strange swift eyes where the soul sits free.
 ('The Triumph of Time')

And with this goes the theme of victim and executioner—Baudelaire writes

Je suis la plaie et le couteau!
 Je suis le soufflet et la joue!
 ('L'Héautontimorouménos')

[I am the wound and the knife!
 I am the cheek and the blow!]

And Swinburne:

Helm of the wound and heft of the knife.
 ('The Triumph of Time')

Or in 'Hertha': 'I am that which unloves me and loves; I am the stricken and the blow.' But in Swinburne all this is bound up with a lyric grace only rarely found in Baudelaire. The delicate Spenser-like quality is quite alien to Baudelaire, the wistful dreaminess and cascading flow. The fact that Swinburne's enthusiasm for De Sade (far more than for Baudelaire) was rooted in his own sexual temperament (algolagnia) does not alter the fact that he could not bring to it the deeper spiritual and moral significance that Baudelaire does: guilt and remorse are quite foreign to Swinburne's nature. His only misery was the frustration his peculiar temperament brought him.

This lack of depth is confirmed by Swinburne's later development. He turns from de Sade to equally exuberant praise of Mazzini and the cause of Italian unity. We find him writing to W.M. Rossetti: 'After all, in spite of jokes and perversities—malgré ce cher marquis et ces foutus journaux—it is *nice* to have something to love and believe in as I do in Italy.' The *Songs Before Sunrise* celebrating freedom and humanity bring him closer to Hugo than to Baudelaire—at the time of his *Spectator* article on Baudelaire he had written five on *Les Misérables*—while under the motherly guidance of Watts-Dunton he finally transferred his love and belief to the British Empire! He was a Shelleyan atheist all his life, and in the neo-Greek classicism of Erechtheus closer to the empty Pagan school which Baudelaire condemned than to Baudelaire's spiritual anguish. Swinburne's 'Before the Crucifix' which Enid Starkie considers to be of the same inspiration as Baudelaire's 'A une charogne', though it shares the fascination with decay, is an essentially humanist attack on God, the sentiments of which might have been shared by Goethe. In later years Swinburne objected to the inclusion of 'Ave Atque Vale', his tribute on hearing of Baudelaire's death, in the Tauchnitz selection, adding 'I never really had much in common with Baudelaire'. Though at the time a denial for the sake of public respectability, this was truer than is often supposed, and the poem in question shows no depth of feeling, only conventional acclaim couched in the language of paleness and barrenness, with sundry poisonous overtones.

Swinburne initiates the phase of decadent Romanticism in England, the final flowering of which in the 1890s is associated with Aubrey Beardsley, *The Yellow Book*, and Oscar Wilde. During this whole period Baudelaire was admired as a master of the perverse and satanic. In particular his cult of artificiality was pushed to its extreme degree by Oscar Wilde, with *A Rebours* by Huysmans as the more immediate model.

Doisieux carries his contempt for normality to the extreme point of locking himself up in a specially constructed house with his rare books and extraordinary furnishings, sleeping away the daylight hours and meditating on the perverse and exquisite by night. His admiration for Baudelaire, we are told, was 'limitless', but the predominant emotion in *Doisieux* is contempt for the mediocrity of others, not disgust with himself. This is the book that inspired *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, *George Moore's Confession of a Young Man*, and the sinister black and white world of Hendsley. It was Huysmans who taught Dorian Gray to look upon evil simply as a mode through which he could realize his conception of the beautiful—a truly Sadian aesthetic. It is true that *Doisieux's* experiment fails, and that Dorian Gray must come to terms with his picture, but the overwhelming concern of these two books is the elaboration of morbid, rare, exotic sensation. This links up with the particular aspect of Baudelaire's aesthetic which was seized upon. 'Le beau est toujours bizarre', said Baudelaire in his *Exposition universelle* of 1855, and again in *Notes nouvelles sur Poe*: 'strangeness . . . is the indispensable seasoning (condiment) of all beauty.' These ideas were taken up by Pater: in his article on the Poetry of Michaelangelo he remarks, 'a certain strangeness . . . is indeed an element in all true works of art' (cf. his description of the 'mystery' of the Gioconda²¹), while in the notorious Conclusion to *The Renaissance* (1875) he sets forth his aesthetic philosophy: 'While all melts under our feet, we may well grasp at any exquisite passion, or any contribution to knowledge that seems by a lifted horizon to set the spirit free for a moment, or any stirring of the senses, strange dyes, strange odours, or work of the artist's hands, or the face of one's friend.' Here the whole of life is turned into an aesthetic experience, establishing a philosophy the very opposite of Baudelaire's: instead of 'irritated melancholy' frustrated of a half-glimpsed paradise, Pater proposes that life should be packed with 'as many pulsations as possible' within the given time—burning always with the 'hard gem-like flame'. The strangeness then is mere novelty, fascination, not the reminder of incompleteness and inadequacy. How remote is the sick and persecuted Baudelaire from this dandified don with his polished dinner glasses and orange strip down the middle of his tablecloth! Yet after Swinburne Pater is the medium whereby Baudelaire's aesthetic was spread in England. Twenty years later, Arthur Symonds in his article on 'The Decadent Movement in Literature'²² gave a retrospective summary of these views—an amalgam of Gautier, Baudelaire and Huysmans. Subsequently the emphasis

shifted from the morbid realism of the decadents to the yearning dreams of the Symbolists—but English literature failed to achieve an integrated expression of the two—the satanic and the divine—such as we find in ‘Dans la brute assoupie un ange se réveille.’²³

Throughout this period Baudelaire was not only part of a general influence, but also a more specific inspiration. The first translations date from 1869—‘A une charogne’, ‘Moesta et Errabunda’, and ‘Lesbos’ by Herne Shepherd, followed by fifteen more the next year by Harry Curren. Enid Starkie has tracked down a number of individual poems directly inspired from particular Baudelaire poems, e.g., Symons’s ‘To One in Alienation’, or Dowson’s ‘Spleen’. She refers to George Moore’s first published book, *Flowers of Passion*, as almost a parody of *Les Fleurs du mal*: according to William Gaunt he bought a copy of *Les Fleurs du mal*, which inspired him to produce ‘Ode to a Dead Body’.²⁴ Oscar Wilde’s ‘The Sphinx’ may be taken as typical of the decadent style, partly deriving from Baudelaire with its sinister artificially wrought imagery:

Your eyes are like fantastic moons that shiver in some stagnant lake,
Your tongue is like some scarlet snake that dances to fantastic
tunes,
Your pulse makes poisonous melodies.

The theory of correspondences was particularly influential. Here is an example from ‘The Opium-Smoker’ by Symons:

I am engulfed, and drown deliciously.
Soft music like a perfume, and sweet light
Golden with audible odours exquisite,
Swathe me with cerements for eternity.

Enid Starkie quotes an example in the Mallarmean manner from Edith Sitwell. It is the heart of Symbolist theory, passes into the aesthetic of Proust, and on into the dream world of *Finnegans Wake*. It passed into painting in the aesthetic theories of Whistler, who called his paintings ‘Symphony’, ‘Nocturne’, and so forth. It was an aspect of the cult of exquisite sensation, connecting Poe’s Roderick Usher, Baudelaire’s ‘Invitation au voyage’, and Wilde’s Dorian Gray. But did the influence not perhaps go deeper than combining poisons and inducing synaesthetic ecstasies? However remote the eternal-undergraduate world of Pater, did not the example of Baudelaire’s wretched life and miserable death not only parallel that of Poe, but also foreshadow the ‘tragic generation’ of the nineties—James and Francis Thomson, Simeon Solomon, Ernest

and others like them—alcoholic, consumptive, willing victims of a morbid muse? Surely something of the same impulse drove Oscar Wilde to his inexplicable martyrdom: the crucified Christ was as much present in their minds as *ce cher Marquis*. But this failure of the life to establish the profundity of the art, nor could any Watts-Dunton have rescued Baudelaire for a life of respectable habits and sentiments. The cold ornament of Symonds as he emerged from the Decadent phase shows the extent to which the movement appeared to an English observer as a dissociation from involvement with reality: 'It pleased some young men in various countries to call themselves Decadents, with all the thrill of identified virtue masquerading as uncomprehended vice.'²⁵

The question may well be asked: why was it only the superficial aspect of Baudelaire's art which was taken up in England? Baudelaire's moral earnestness has often been attributed to an upbringing under Calvinist influence: in Protestant England one would have expected such an influence to be stronger. The answer may partly lie in the fact that the English Puritan tradition was middle class—Victorian Establishment in fact—whereas the aesthetic movement was aristocratic: even when not of aristocratic birth its adherents, moulded for the most part by public schools and Oxford, were adjusted to the aristocratic type, according to which too much seriousness was bad form. Thus the anti-bourgeois, anti-philistine stance of the movement was assimilated to aristocratic disdain towards the common mass and a conscious cultivation of superiority, which reached its supreme insolence in Oscar Wilde. It may not therefore be entirely a coincidence that the moral seriousness of Baudelaire first enters English literature in a Protestant from New England where the Puritans were the aristocratic class. T.S. Eliot's invocation of Baudelaire at the end of the first section of *The Waste Land* (1922) occurs in a poem unlike anything the earlier aesthetes had written, a poem of strong moral preoccupations, in which evil is certainly no mere 'mode' of the beautiful. But whereas Baudelaire had sung in the tradition of Pascal and Racine of the universal evil in the heart of man, Eliot laments a civilization in decay, and evokes its lost glories rather than any half-glimpsed paradise beyond the tomb. Between *The Waste Land* and *Ash Wednesday* (1930) Eliot enters the Anglo-Catholic Church, and comes to mourn 'the vanished power of the usual reign'. In 1930 he wrote an Introduction to Baudelaire's *Intimate Journals*, where, as might be expected, it is Baudelaire the rediscoverer of Christianity which most attracts his attention. But Eliot does not seek religious inspiration in

Baudelaire—that has already been fully provided by Dante. What he praises is the new stock of imagery Baudelaire provided for modern poetry:

It is not merely in the use of imagery of common life, not merely in the use of imagery of the sordid life of a great metropolis, but in the elevation of such imagery to the *first intensity*—presenting it as it is, and yet making it represent something much more than itself—that Baudelaire has created a mode of release and expression for other men.

The use of such imagery in Eliot's own poetry had been evident from the first, though more under the influence of Laforgue perhaps, whom he calls a 'minor successor' of Baudelaire. In *The Waste Land* and *Four Quartets* Eliot specifically uses the city of London as Baudelaire had used Paris to express a moral universe. Eliot had first read Baudelaire 'with great impact' as he tells us between 1907 and 8, and he later said that if he had not discovered Baudelaire and all his descendants he would never have been able to write.²⁶ But the decadent side of Symbolism had no appeal for him—he dismisses the satanic paraphernalia of Baudelaire as the trappings of the age, and thought that *A Rebours* were best forgotten.

After the trial and condemnation of Oscar Wilde, English poetry retreated from the stews of Soho to the countryside: anything less like Baudelaire than the Georgians can hardly be imagined. But it was a short-lived interlude. Already before the war broke out, T.E. Hulme was writing: 'A man is essentially bad, he can only accomplish anything of value by discipline.'—sentiments of which, as Eliot points out in quoting them, Baudelaire would have entirely approved. The war made human evil too gross a reality to be aesthetically treated any longer, but the mood of the twenties was iconoclastic rather than despairing. Few would share Eliot's approval of Baudelaire's attitude to sexual love²⁷—certainly not Yeats, who had rediscovered the alternative tradition of tragic joy through Blake and Nietzsche. It might have been supposed that the Aldous Huxley who wrote 'Wordsworth in the Tropics' exposing the fallacy of Rousseau's view of Nature, which is seen rather as a sinister menace conquered by civilization, would have been more attuned to Baudelaire, but in fact Huxley felt no such menace within human nature. His essay on Baudelaire in *Do What You Will* (1929) is a cocksure dismissal from the school of good sense. For Huxley, Baudelaire is 'hopelessly old fashioned' and 'grotesque' with his gloomy Augustinian

...Dostoevsky, he seems never to have had 'a decent
 ...ship' with anyone, preferring instead the superiority of
 ...The essay reflects current 'emancipated' attitudes, and is
 ...Waley's no nonsense humanism.

...of the Imagist movement, like Pound or Empson,
 ...concerned with technique than moral anguish, while the lea-
 ...the thirties were political idealists, who tended to see the
 ...in capitalism rather than human nature: Baudelaire on the
 ...democracy.²⁸ Evil is a constant theme with Auden,
 ...introduces a sinister gothic note, but the manner is
 ...playful, a display of virtuosity nearer to Pope than Baudelaire.

...and Spender all use the modern city imagery emanating
 ...to Eliot from Baudelaire, but the nearest in spirit to Baudelaire
 ...Edwin Muir, the translator of Kafka, whose well-known
 ...'The Combat' depicts the victim and executioner theme as part of
 ...in a way that Baudelaire would have approved. But long before
 ...found refuge in the Church and Isherwood in the Ramakrishna
 ...Baudelaire had become part of the generalized modern cons-
 ...along with Dostoevsky, Strindberg, Rilke and others who
 ...the horror and the ecstasy. There is no English poet quite like
 ...possibly because imperial complacency had penetrated our conscious-
 ...too deeply, possibly because the English spirit shrinks from the
 ...such poetry demands—English critics tend to
 ...complain that Baudelaire had no sense of humour.

Notes

[The author is indebted for background material and certain illus-
 trative quotations to:

Marcel A. Ruff : *L'Esprit du mal et l'esthétique Baudelairienne*.
 Armand Colin, Paris, 1955.

Erud Starkie : *From Gautier to Eliot—The Influence of France on
 English Literature 1851-1939*.
 Hutchinson, London, 1960.

Humphrey Hare : *Swinburne—A Biographical Approach*. H.F. and G. Witherly, London, 1949.

The references in roman numerals to poems by Baudelaire may be found in the Blackwell French Text, edited by Enid Starkie.]

¹Vous avez donné à certains épanchements de l'âme un accent nouveau. Votre vers presque toujours douloureux, souvent profond, va chercher tous ceux qui souffrent, quels qu'ils soient, honorés ou déçus, bons ou méchants.'

²...une faculté quasi divine qui perçoit tout d'abord, en dehors des méthodes philosophiques, les rapports intimes et secrets des choses'. ('Notes nouvelles...')

³la partie blasphématoire de la passion; ils ont projeté des rayons splendides, éblouissants, sur le Lucifer latent qui est installé dans tout cœur humain.'

⁴Starkie, XXXVI.

⁵For the association of art with evil, cf. de Sade: 'la vertu est une chose essentiellement stérile, impuissante, bornée, tandis que le vice fait germer et fleurir' (quoted by Swinburne in his essay on Baudelaire); Baudelaire: 'Tu mettrais l'univers entier dans la ruelle...' (Starkie, XXV); Thomas Mann: *Doctor Faustus*; Swinburne: 'The lilies and languors of virtue / The roses and raptures of vice'; Mandeville's *Fable of the Bees*, and *Rameau's Nephew* by Diderot.

⁶Starkie, XXX.

⁷From *Gautier to Eliot*, p. 51.

⁸Sans la charité je ne suis qu'un cymbale retentissante. Mes humiliations ont été des grâces de Dieu. Ma phase d'égoïsme est-elle finie?

⁹Me prenez-vous pour un barbare comme vous, et me croyez-vous capable de me divertir aussi tristement que vous faites?' ('Notes nouvelles sur Edgar Poe')

¹⁰Si les impressions nous sont d'autant plus agréables qu'elles sont plus vives, et si la durée d'une même impression en émousse la vivacité, nous devons donc être avides de ces impressions neuves, qui produisent dans notre âme le plaisir de la surprise: les artistes, jaloux de nous plaire et d'exciter en nous ces sortes d'impressions, doivent donc, après avoir en partie épuisé les combinaisons du beau, y substituer le singulier, que nous préférons au beau, parce qu'il fait sur nous une impression plus neuve, et par conséquent plus vive.—*De l'Esprit*.

¹¹Des poètes illustres s'étaient partagés depuis longtemps les provinces les plus fleuries du domaine poétique. Il m'a paru plaisant, et d'autant plus agréable que la tâche était plus difficile, d'extraire la beauté du mal.—*Projets de préface*.

¹²...tirer des jouissances nouvelles et subtiles même de la douleur, de la catastrophe et de la fatalité.'

¹³La Beauté—Starkie, XVII.

¹⁴*Fusées*, XVI.

...nature qui a créé le parricide et l'anthropophagie, et mille
 ...que la pudeur et la délicatesse nous empêchent de nommer....
 ...l'animal humain a puisé le goût dans le ventre de sa mère, est originel-
 La vertu, au contraire, est artificielle, surnaturelle....'—*Le peintre*
 ...
 ...continuation of Nature as 'abominable' is thus to be contrasted with
 ...of de Baudelaire's 'abominations' such as we find in Swinburne.
 ...de la forme pousse à des désordres monstrueux et incon-
 ...par la passion l'égoïsme du beau, du drôle, du joli, du pittoresque, car
 ...les notions du juste et du vrai disparaissent.
 ...ne peut pas s'assimiler à la science ou à la morale; elle n'a pas la
 ...elle n'a qu'elle-même.'
 ...la fois par la poésie et à travers la poésie, par et à travers la musique,
 ...se trouvent les splendeurs situées derrière le tombeau; et, quand un poème
 ...les larmes au bord des yeux, ces larmes ne sont pas la preuve d'un excès
 ...elles ont bien plutôt le témoignage d'une mélancolie irritée, d'une postula-
 ...d'une nature exilée dans l'imparfait et qui voudrait s'emparer immédiate-
 ...d'un paradis révélé.'—'Notes nouvelles sur Edgar Poe.'
 ...meil de vous dire que vous avez poussé un peu loin ma défense.
 ...Moraliste que vous feignez obligeamment de le croire.'
 —Letter from Baudelaire to Sw.
 ...*Revue*, XIV, IV, p. 152. cf Swinburne, e.g. vs. 33 of 'The Triumph of
 ...
 ...it is a beauty wrought out from within the flesh, the deposit, little cell by cell,
 ...thoughts and fantastic reveries and exquisite passions.
 ...*Magazine*, Nov. 1893.
 ...*Revue*, XVI
 ...*Aesthetic Adventure*.
 ...*Symbolist Movement in Literature*, 1899.
 ...*in France Libre*, June 1944.
 ...III Moi, je dis: la volupté unique et suprême de l'amour git dans la
 ...de faire le mal.
 ...*Revue* ... à no XXVII.

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BAUDELAIRE AND GERMAN LITERATURE

German literature has, as is well-known, in its historical development many features in common with other European literatures. Its periods of flourishing and decay, although rarely coinciding with those in France, England, Italy, and Spain, were associated with religious, intellectual, and social movements common to the whole Continent. Of course, no European literature has developed in complete independence of its neighbours; but none is bound by closer ties or is more deeply indebted to its fellows than that of Germany. Thus, the study of her literature is in a very great measure a study of what is now called Comparative Literature. And I am tempted, therefore, to place my present topic 'Baudelaire and German Literature' in a wider context by throwing a cursory glance at the inter-relations existing throughout the centuries between German and two or three other major European literatures.

While Germany was still engaged, early in the twelfth century, in freeing herself from monastic asceticism, and England was being remodelled by the Normans, French singers were composing the first national chansons, the lyric of the troubadours was flourishing in Provence, and the Poema del Cid had taken shape in Spain. It is only towards the close of the twelfth century that German poets came under the influence of their French contemporaries and the Arthurian epic became the chosen form of courtly romance, what it was already in France. During the Middle High German period, German literature almost exclusively produced poetry and could not boast of prose writers like Villehardouin or Joinville in France, and Duns Scotus or Roger Bacon in England. In the 14th century, when Italy could point to Dante, Petrarch, and Boccaccio, and English poetry was steadily advancing towards the poetic efflorescence associated with Chaucer, German literature remained relatively silent. In the great era of European literature which opened with Shakespeare and Marlowe, with Cervantes and Lope de Vega

With Calderon, Milton, and the dramatists of France, Corneille, and Moliere Germany had comparatively little to say, and at the beginning of the 18th century, when England and France were the foreground of European intellectual life, German literature was more imitative than creative. But from the middle of the eighteenth century, German literature became extremely rich. In the fugue which England in the 18th century led, as it were, with the first voice, Germany took on the second, and to Germany fell the last and most important part. History knows perhaps of no other example of marvelous recovery comparable with the development from Gottsched to Herder and Schiller from Leibnitz to Kant. The first third of the eighteenth century in Germany then saw the age of romanticism, a movement powerful enough to put its stamp on practically every literature of the period.

Baudelaire should have been well informed about the German literature preceding his time, since Heinrich Heine had taken pains to acquaint the French public with recent writings in Germany through his *Die Romantische Schule* in the early thirties, originally written in German language. The very first sentence made clear what he thought of French curiosity vis-a-vis her neighbour: 'Mme. de Staël's book *Germany* is the only comprehensive information about Germany's intellectual life which reached France so far. And still, since the publication of her book a good number of years have elapsed and an entirely new literature has in the meantime sprung up in Germany.' This is a relevant passage, indeed, because it expresses between the lines the rarely admitted fact that the interest of our western neighbour in our literature was much less evident than our interest in French literature. Baudelaire will be a case to the point, because a comparative study reveals that German literature was much more influenced by Baudelaire than Baudelaire was by German literature.

In 1797 Friedrich Schlegel wrote an essay entitled 'Modern Poetry' in which we read: 'Now-a-days you are likely to find anything as the highest principle of art and as the decisive value but the beautiful. Beauty is, as a fact, so completely absent as a guiding factor that you must consider many of the most important works as obvious representations and interpretations of the ugly.' And again: 'Absence of moral principles seems to give modern poetry its main character, confusion seems to be its common law, lawlessness its moving spirit and scepticism the result of its theory.' This is, to say the least, a rather surprising evaluation

of a literary period in which Lessing, Goethe, Schiller and Hölderlin were writing. What then inspired Schlegel's remarks?

Let us remember here that the theoretical foundation for Baudelairean poetry may already be traced in the poetic theory of Novalis as expressed in his 'Fragments' and his 'Henry of Ofterdingen.' What Novalis says about poetry, almost exclusively refers to lyric poetry which for him becomes an equivalent of pure poetry. The cool and reasoning mind takes the lead in the creative process. 'The poet is pure steel, hard like a stone,' he says. Poetry is a protection against everyday life and its imaginative powers may claim the freedom to use all pictures pell-mell. It is a singing opposition against a world of fixed habits. The poet may only rely on his creative and dictatorial imagination which does not depend on any information received by the senses. Therefore his language is self-contained like mathematical formulae. To understand this language one has to be in the secret. As Baudelaire will write 'I think it is glorious not to be understood,' or as Montale put it 'Nobody would write verse if the purpose of poetry were to make oneself understood.' Harmony and euphony have replaced the older categories of comprehensiveness and clarity. Novalis clearly puts the form above all subject-matter and dreams of poems without any meaning or context, with only fragments of them understandable, just pure music. He demands a gleam of chaos to shine through every poem in order to alienate it from dull reality and lift it into lofty regions. With Baudelaire these 'lofty regions where the poet settles like in a new home country' become the artificial paradises (*paradis artificiels*). Baudelaire could find such an artificial paradise in the *Mountain of Venus*, as Richard Wagner's opera *Tannhäuser* was originally called. And he interpreted this opera in his famous letter to Richard Wagner in 1860 as the battlefield between 'heaven and hell,' 'devil and God.' The ideal of an artificial paradise is also most evident in E.T.A. Hoffmann's 'The Golden Pot' where the world of the fairy-tale becomes wholly visible and real, while the real world is more or less visualised as a fairy-tale. The poetical theory of Novalis along with that of Rousseau and Diderot have strongly influenced the French Romantic movement and hence directly also Baudelaire (Baudelaire knew Novalis). As a poet of the evil Baudelaire certainly had his predecessors like F. v. Schiller, William Blake, and Byron. The horror poets preceding Baudelaire are even mentioned in Goethe's *Faust*. There they refused to attend the fancy dress ball organized by the Emperor with the excuse that they are in the middle of a most interesting

on with a newly resurrected vampire, out of which conversation
new kind of poetry might emerge. But I still maintain that the
major references to German contemporaries in the work of
is part of a general French attitude towards the literature
of the eastern borders. And I repeat that since 1800 underneath the
of German classicism a literary current began to flow which fore-
and a literary revolution beginning with Baudelaire. If Heinrich
said that out of his great pains he made his little songs, Baudelaire
that he made the gold of his verses out of the mud of cities. And
Dante conjures up nightmarish scenes in *Dante's Death* just
Baudelaire comes of age. Here is an excerpt:

Danton: When once History opens its tombs, despotism might
still choke from the fragrance of our corpses.

Marat: We stank sufficiently during lifetime. These are phrases
for posterity, aren't they, Danton; they don't concern
us really.

Marat: Are we the suckling pigs who are whipped to death by
rods for princely dinner tables, so that their flesh become
more savoury?

Danton: Are we children who are roasted in the glowing Moloch-
arms of this world and (who are) tickled by rays of
light, so that the gods rejoice at their laughing?

...

Danton: World is chaos. Nonentity is the world-god to be
born.

In order to trace a possible influence of German literature on Baudelaire, I have so far examined the German literary scene before Baudelaire and have tried to suggest that, except for Novalis and a sporadic mentioning of Heine and Goethe, Baudelaire makes practically no reference to German literature, although this literature had just experienced its heyday. Reasons for this neglect are partly to be found in his entirely new outlook on poetry strongly conflicting with any classical concept of it and partly, I said, in the general French attitude towards German literature.

Baudelaire's pre-occupation with Germany is, as is wellknown, all the more evident in the field of music. Thomas Mann calls Baudelaire the first Wagner adept, and his admiration for Wagner knows indeed no limit. In various essays Baudelaire hails Wagner as his brother whose music has already expressed what he was still trying to express

in his poetry. It is interesting to note that most of Wagner's sources had no relation with his century, but were medieval material flowing from the pens of poets like Heine and E.T.A. Hoffmann.

Let us now divert our attention to the period following Baudelaire's death. As far as German literature is concerned the ground was not favourably prepared for any appreciable influence of Baudelaire until the turn of the century. Nor were the political tensions and the war of 1870 particularly encouraging for cultural exchanges between the two countries. So Germany was again, as in earlier centuries, half a century late in assimilating and adapting an important literary movement abroad, and it is only with the advent of expressionism that Germany really entered the modern age in literature.

The German scholar Hugo Friedrich once remarked that with Baudelaire French literature became a European affair, and one may add that from the close of the 19th century onward literature in general, like so many other factors in modern life, became truly international. The poets try to know each other. Paris was considered the centre. On the famous Tuesday evenings Stefan George, Yeats, Ruben Dario and others met regularly at Mallarmé's residence. Swinburne, Oscar Wilde, d'Annunzio were in Paris, so were the leading Spanish and Portuguese symbolists and later on Rilke. Mallarmé, Verlaine, Rimbaud on their part knew England and English poets. They understood each other's languages, read foreign poetry and almost all of them were translators. Baudelaire and Mallarmé translated from English. Mallarmé was even a teacher of English and had a German wife. An essential part of Rossetti's works are translations. Stefan George translated French, English, Italian, Dutch and Polish poets; Rilke translated Valéry and wrote in French, like Heinrich Heine. Oscar Wilde's *Salome* first appeared in French, while many of Verlaine's poems have English titles.

Until the early nineties Stefan George writes and pronounces his Christian name in French (Etienne). André Gide, who saw the poet in 1908, writes about him: 'He expresses himself faultlessly in our language, although a bit timidly, it seems, and shows an astonishing knowledge and comprehension of our authors, poets in particular.' George was very familiar with French culture, for he had heard the praise of France from his grandfather who spoke only French. And long after he had returned to his own country, voices from the west lured him with the tender words of the *Song of Roland*: RETURNENT FRANC EN FRANCE DOUCE TERRE.

the poet who introduced Haendelare in Germany with
The Flowers of Lull which appeared in 1901 and has
 Carlo Schmidt's translation, remained the best Ger-
 of *Les Fleurs du mal*. George translated altogether 118
 poems. In the preface to the translation he says: 'The
 translation of *Les Fleurs du mal* is not to introduce a
 the joy which I always derived from shaping words
 this is why I stopped the translation at a moment where
 exhausted my possibilities.' The most beautiful render-
 the translation of the poem 'Beauty,' which should be
 in French and German for assessing the different sound
 I must personally say that none of the translations of
 poems in any language has so far satisfied me, but I feel
 poetical rendering comes as near the original as possible.

LA BEAUTE

(I am beautiful, O mortals, as a dream in stone)

Je suis belle, ô mortels! comme un rêve de pierre,
 Mon sein, où chacun s'est meurtri tour à tour,
 Est fait pour inspirer au poète un amour
 Éternel et muet ainsi que la matière.

Je tiens dans l'azur comme un sphinx incompris;
 D'un cœur de neige à la blancheur des cygnes;
 Je hais le mouvement qui déplace les lignes,
 Et jamais je ne pleure et jamais je ne ris.

Je suis, devant mes grandes attitudes,
 Qui fut l'art d'emprunter aux plus fiers monuments,
 Ennemement leurs jours en d'austères études;

Je suis, pour fasciner ces dociles amants,
 De purs miroirs qui font toutes choses plus belles:
 Mes yeux, mes larges yeux aux clartés éternelles!

—

Ich menschen ich bin schön ein traum von stein!
 Mein bruch der zu blutigen küssen treibt:
 Dem dichter flösst er eine liebe ein
 Ich stumm ist wie der stoff und ewig bleibt.

Ich bin die sphinx die keiner noch erfasst
 Ich herz von schnee und schwanenkleid vereint
 Ich jedes rücken an den linien hasst—
 Ich habe nie gelacht und nie geweint.

Die dichter all vor meinem grossen wesen
 —An stolzen bauten scheint es abgelesen—
 Zerquälen ständig sich in strengen schulen.

Für sie besitz ich die gefügen buhlen
 Wo alles schöner spiegelt eine quelle:
 Mein aug mein weites aug von ewiger helle.

In Paris, George becomes acquainted with Baudelaire's essay on the Dandy. 'These persons,' Baudelaire had written, 'are only concerned with the cult of the beautiful. They have enough money and leisure without which their imaginations would be reduced to temporary fancies and could not be materialized.... But all these things are for the perfect Dandy only a symbol of the aristocratic superiority of his intellect.... It is his pleasure to surprise and shock others and never to be surprised or shocked himself.... To a certain extent his attitude is related to spiritualism and stoicism.... Dandyism especially appears during times of transition in which democracy has not yet asserted itself and the foundations of aristocracy have only been partly shaken. In such periods of general confusion, some idle, but strong men may decide to found a new kind of aristocracy, which will be all the more indestructible, the more it is based on the most precious and divine gifts and abilities, which are no match for whatever money and work can do. Dandyism is the ultimate realisation of heroism in times of decay.' During his years in Paris, George consciously adopted the style and the mannerisms of the Dandy. After his return to Germany, he gathers round him an exclusive circle of intellectuals. Strict rules regulate their intercourse and George's requisites are from now on the monocle and a grain of incense on the burning cigarette. André Gide describes him in 1908 as follows:

He talks little, but in a deep voice that demands attention. Large clergyman's frock-coat with two clasps at the top, opening on a black velvet stock tied on top of the collar and flowing over it. The simple gold slide-ring of a cord that holds watch or monocle introduces a discrete brilliance into all this black....

Baudelaire's idea of the 'livre unique', strictly arranged on mathematical principles, began to haunt George. His '7th Ring' is based on a definite numerical system. Bonehardt's criticism of this kind of composition pointed out that it does not reach our feelings, because it is only perceptible after a counting effort. But this criticism fails to impress, because

Baudelaire's poems are placed in an ideal space. Nature and naturalism become for him what they were non-descript and even barbaric. In his early poems, he creates a stereotyped word scenery of an exotic nature, which is transferred to the intellectual plane, as in the poem

They snatched us from the fallow fjords,
 Their lips are uplow, exotic flowers blow—
 Your flesh as snowbloom melts away,
 The stalks begin to surge in chords
 To aloe, tea and sprays of bay.

The exotic perfume of his lady inspires Baudelaire to create a scene, happy and bright, under a sun, warm and sunny. A lazy isle which generous nature, stocks with weird fruits of strange delight,—or invites his beloved to follow him to his 'paradise' in 'The Invitation to the Voyage', George's poem to come to the park they say is dead in his perhaps own poem

Come to the park they say is dead, and view
 The shimmer of the smiling shores beyond,
 The cloudless clouds with unexpected blue
 Diffuse a light on motley path and pond.

The tender grey, the burning yellow seize
 Of larch and boxwood, mellow is the breeze.
 Not wholly do the tardy roses wane,
 Go to and gather them and wreath the chain.

The purple on the twists of wilding vine,
 The last of asters you shall not forget,
 And what of living verdure lingers yet,
 Around the autumn vision lightly twine.

The titles of some of the later poems like 'Litany,' 'Satan' and 'Transport' remind of Baudelaire, which, of course, does not exclude a strong influence also of Mallarmé.

In December 1891, Stefan George, who was staying in Vienna, was introduced to the young poet Hofmannstahl. Although the relations between the two poets were at times very strained, Hofmannstahl was soon initiated into the symbolist fraternity. It would lead too far to trace the more hidden relations, especially in

Hofmannstahl's early works, with Baudelaire, Rimbaud and Mallarmé within this short survey; I would still like to mention at least the existence of such influence especially in his 'Letters of Lord Chandos'.

Exactly twenty years after Baudelaire's death, two poets were born who later on were to remind of Baudelaire more than any other German poet. Both of them died an unnatural and premature death—one was drowned and the other committed suicide. Neither of them reached the age of thirty. I am speaking of Georg Heym and Georg Trakl. While Heym created grandiose pagan visions of an urban civilization, and presaged the destruction of the metropolitan centres by fire and explosion, Trakl sometimes proclaims brotherly sympathy with other human beings equally condemned to suffering.

Under arches of thorns,
O my brother, we blind
Clock-hands are climbing
Toward midnight.

Baudelaire and Rimbaud's influence is almost everywhere inescapable in their poetry. As Baudelaire and Rimbaud had done earlier, Heym describes the misery, the tortures and the disgust of city life. The hunger and the rubbish of the suburbs, the pains of the poor and cripples and the lot of the dead. Baudelaire had spoken of cities as 'the terrifying landscape,' and with Heym diabolic demons sit nightly on the roofs and shriek and scream like dying cats. His vision of the 'God of the City' is horrifying. 'The smoke of the chimneys entangles him like incense. In the dark he shakes his butcher's fist and his breath burns down the roads.' In his review of Heym's first collection of poems *The Eternal Day*, the contemporary poet Ernst Stadler writes: 'Heym is the priest of the horror. A visionary of the horrifying, a brother of Poe and Baudelaire.' The title of a prose poem by Trakl is 'Transformations of the Evil,' of another '5th October', both are highly surrealistic and remind us of the darkest passages of Baudelaire and Rimbaud. Their influence is evident in almost every sentence. Here is a passage from 'Transformations of the Evil':

The hell of sleep; dark lane, brown little garden. On blue evenings you hear the soft tinkling of the dead bodies. Tender green flowers hover about them and they have lost their physiognomy or it bends down on the cold forehead of the

...purple flame of lust; dying
 ...over the dark steps into darkness. Somebody
 ...your hands and your eyes followed him for a
 ...steps in the shade of a mutilated apple tree.
 ...its purple glimmer through the black branches
 ...peels off its skin in the grass. Ah, this darkness.
 ...which wets the icy forehead and the sad dreams
 ...from wine, in the village pub under the beams black
 ...smoke. You, wilderness still, which conjures up
 ...from the brown tobacco clouds and produces from
 ...blinks of a condor when it flutters round black clips
 ...my and icy sea. You, a green metal and inside a
 ...ready to sing of bone hills, gloomy times and the
 ...fall of the angel. O! despair, going down on its knees
 ...silent cry. A dead visits you. Self-shed blood trickles
 ...heart, in the dark eye-brows unbearable moments build
 ...dark encounter. You, a purple moon, while the
 ...appears in the green shade of the olive tree.'

...of the prose-poem, as that of 'Dream and Insanity',
 ...in Baudelaire and Rimbaud and their familiar word
 ...purple moon, flame of lust, sad dreams emanating from
 ...hands, green metal, fall of the angel, and the olive tree.
 ...Baudelaire was perhaps the first eminently urban poet for whom,
 ...in his own word, the mud of the city was the indispensable
 ...out of which he formed the gold of his verses. Although
 ...nowhere a detailed description of Paris, this city is
 ...present in his works. Baudelaire's hopeless addiction to the
 ...and inspired, directly and indirectly, a poetical avalanche
 ...with life in a modern city. The urban poet G. Benn sums up
 ...'I don't see much of nature and rarely I come near a lake; only
 ...I pass by gardens, heavily fenced, that is all; I depend on
 ...radio, newspapers and magazines.' In A. Doebelin's volu-
 ...the novel about Berlin, *Berlin Alexanderplatz*, the city appears
 ...the venue of gangsters, prostitutes and souteneurs. The hero of
 ...Huxley's novel *Fabian* works in an advertising agency and assesses
 ...his city in no flattering terms: 'As regards the inhabitants, the city resem-
 ...like a mental asylum, in the east crime has settled down, in the centre the
 ...underworld in the north poverty resides, in the west prostitution and
 ...may be found in all directions.'

In Brecht's 'The Rise and Fall of the Town of Mahogony' we read:
 'Underneath the cities are gutters and drains. In the cities there is nothing
 and above them there is smoke.' The most shattering account of the

demon city we find in his most impressive poem 'Poor BB'. In spite of a probable inspiration by Baudelaire, this is Brecht's very own style:

POOR B. B.

I Bertolt Brecht, come from the black forests. My mother took me into the towns while I was in her womb. And the chill of the forests will be in me until I peter out.

I am at home in the asphalt city. From the very beginning equipped with every sacrament for the dying: with newspapers, and tobacco and liquor. Suspicious and idle and in the end contented. I am pleasant to people. I put on a bowler hat as their custom is. I say: They are quite particularly smelly animals. And I say: It doesn't matter, so am I.

In the morning I sometimes sit with a few women in my empty rocking-chairs and I look at them happily and say to them: I am the sort of man you can't rely on.

Towards evening. I collect men round me. We address one another as 'Gentlemen'. They sit with their feet on my tables and say: Things will be better for us soon. And I never ask: When?

Towards morning in the grey dawn the pine-trees piddle and the birds, their vermin, begin to cry. At that time I finish my glass in the city and chuck my cigar away and go to sleep, worried.

We have been living, a frivolous breed, in houses which were supposed to be indestructible. (Thus we have built the long cells of Manhattan Island and the tenuous antennae that talk to the Atlantic).

Of these cities there will remain what passes through them—the wind! The house makes the eater cheerful—he empties it. We know that we are only preliminary and that after us there will come—nothing worth mentioning.

In the coming earthquakes I hope I shan't let my cigar go out for bitterness—I, Bertolt Brecht, cast away into the asphalt cities out of the black forest when I was in the womb in time long past.

Reminiscences of Baudelaire's poem 'Morning Twilight' are evident in scene 4 of Bertolt Brecht's *The Good Person of Szechwan*. The relevant passages in Baudelaire's poem read:

'It was the hour when a swarm of evil dreams twists swarthy adolescents on their pillows; when like a bloodshot eye that throbs and jerks, the lamp makes a red stain on the day-light. The shuddering dawn, in her pink and green dress, wended her ways slowly along the deserted Seine, and gloomy Paris, rubbing his eyes, laid hold of his tools, an old man doomed to toil.'

In Brecht's drama, Shen Teh says to the audience: 'I had never seen the city at dawn. These were the hours when I used to lie with my filthy

...terrified to wake up. Today, I mixed with the
men who were washing down the streets... I tell
blacks of buildings are like rubbish heaps with little
...the sky is pink but still transparent, clear of dust.
...a great deal if you are not in love and cannot see your
...she rises from her couch like a sober old craftsman,
...fresh air and reaching for his tools, as the poets

...H Benn expressed in German the same fascination
...that haunted the poems of Baudelaire. Benn wanted
...into self-contained artifacts and thus sought an essen-
...olution. He hunted, like Baudelaire and Mallarmé,
...him and fought to find an absolute verse of skilfully
...words. The following poem is typical of Benn:

...lost, by stratospheres exploded
...victim lamb of gamma rays—
...held, by chimeras of infinity goaded,
...my parapet of Notre-Dame.
...days without night-time and morn are sliding
...years heret of fruit and of the snow's white,
...dangerous intimacy in hiding—
...the world as flight.

...absolute attitude towards poetry characterised Rainer Maria
...was for some time the secretary to the French sculptor Rodin.
...no longer emotions, but resulted from life-long experiences
...to be compressed into self-contained images. Clear traces of
...may be found in his *Notebook of Malte Laurids Brigge*.
...mentioned Brecht. In his notes entitled 'The Beauty in
...of Baudelaire' the communist Brecht—who is often far
...identical with the poet Brecht—strongly criticises Bau-
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'Baudelaire is the poet of the petty bourgeoisie in France at a period
...which already revealed the unprofitable futility of the services
...which this class had so willingly rendered to the rich in cruelly
...oppressing the working classes. The song of this cock contains
...three stanzas. Poverty with him is the poverty of the the man in
...the despair is the despair of the parasite, and the disdain
...that of the tramp. Modernity, which was to become an antiquity,
...only became an antique. Baudelaire expresses in no way his

epoch, not even ten years of it. Soon he will no longer be understood and even today we cannot do without a commentary. His words are only new like worn garments are that have been turned. His images are, as it were, framed and everything is too packed and overloaded. What is supposed to be sublime, is only tilted, affected and pompous. Take, for example, his poem 'Les petites vieilles'. Even today it already sounds funny, although really funny, in the good sense of the word. But what an amount of historical knowledge is necessary to see the humour of it. It is significant that, while translating this poem, I could not bring myself to mention the marble out of which the forehead of the old woman was supposed to be made. Today, any man in the street shits on marble in the W.C.s.

The nervousness about his poems could be called good: there will, even in future, be metropolitan cities. But this nervousness is too obviously the result of a bad conscience, and that at a time which could, except for those with a good conscience, boast of people with no conscience at all. Cynicism is no compensation for that and the great confusion of his poems is actually not their subject but their fate.'

Sartre, the most relentless critic of Baudelaire, must have rejoiced at these lines.

A positive and entirely different assessment of Baudelaire is offered by another Marxist writer, Walter Benjamin, who was born in Berlin in 1892 and died in 1940. His work betrays a life-long involvement and association with Baudelaire. In his essays 'About some motives in Baudelaire's poetry' and 'Central Park' we find some of the deepest remarks written in German language on the poet. Among other aspects Benjamin, for instance, closely examined Baudelaire's shock-effects, his treatment of the masses in the cities, which, according to Benjamin, the poet understands instinctively. In this connection he points out, for example, that one of the most famous poems of *The Flowers of Evil*, 'A une passante,' is intrinsically based on the presence of these masses, although they are not mentioned even with a single word. On another page, Benjamin points out that in the poem 'The Sun' it is perhaps the only time that we see the poet really at work. The way Baudelaire, describes himself in this poem strongly reminds of his description of the fierce attacks on the canvas of his friend, the painter Constantin Guys: 'When the cruel sun strikes blow upon blow on the city and the meadows, the roofs and the cornfields, I go practising my fantastic fencing all alone, scenting a chance rhyme in every corner, stumbling against words as against cobblestones, sometimes striking on verses I had long dreamt of.'

works of *Leul* have certainly gained in importance by that Baudelaire never wrote a novel.

The constant influence of the senses with Baudelaire keeps in the shadow of cosiness. The snobbery of Baudelaire is the eccentric formula of this strict and unrelenting sense of cosiness and his satanism is nothing more and nothing less than an alertness always ready to drive it away, never it could appear.

The heroic attitude of Baudelaire is very closely connected with Nietzsche. Even if he does not abandon Catholicism, his experience of the universe is exactly the same which Nietzsche expressed in his sentence: 'God is dead'.

The constitution is the yeast which swells up the masses of the city in Baudelaire's imagination.

The recurrent recurrence which *The Flowers of Evil* have had to the city is deeply connected with a certain aspect which is continuous in the first appearance of the city in verse. This aspect is the frailty and infirmity of the city which has found its most perfect expression in his poem 'The Morning Twilight'.

There is thus remarkably little evidence in Baudelaire of an acquaintance with German literature, although the German romantic movement, especially as he knew it from Heinrich Heine's book, must have had a certain influence on him. Only the poetic theory of Novalis evidently impressed him. Goethe is only mentioned but nowhere really assessed. Baudelaire admired all the more German music: he knew Weber, praised Richard Wagner openly, defended him against Schopenhauer, and wrote a poem in honour of Beethoven ('A la musique').

It is really only around the turn of the century that Baudelaire finds an echo in German literature with the advent of expressionism. Stefan George, Georg Heym and Georg Trakl are the three poets most influenced by Baudelaire during this time. Gottfried Benn and R. M. Rilke are the next poets whose aesthetic outlook in particular goes back to Baudelaire and the French Symbolists. B. Brecht takes on the whole a negative attitude towards Baudelaire, although he cannot escape the influence in his poetry. Walter Benjamin is a Marxist critic and the writer who most

willingly admitted and confessed his fascination with Baudelaire. The most objective evaluation of Baudelaire in Germany came from him, from Wilhelm Hausenstein and Hugo Friedrich. The best German translation of *The Flowers of Evil* is still, in spite of the many poetic liberties taken, George's translation which I personally prefer to the one by Carlo Schmidt, the present Vice-President of the German Parliament.

Some poets of the younger generation, especially Wolfgang Borchert were too petrified by the horrors of the Second World War to need any reference to Baudelaire. More and more, the founder of modern poetry is taken for granted and references to him become rarer, as it happened with the inventors of penicillin, and the discoverer of the atoms.

German literature has always been a very individualistic literature, and has almost never known the collective appeal of a 'social' literature like in France. None of the German poets has, therefore, slavishly imitated Baudelaire and with many of them Baudelaire's influence did not outlast their youth. Rud. Al. Schröder is a case to the point. With others, like Kafka, the influence is not precisely traceable, but can be imagined to have been of a more indirect and unconscious nature. The same should apply to Thomas Mann's novel *Dr. Faustus* which clearly betrays an influence of Baudelaire, especially in the figure of Adrian whose venereal disease was that of Baudelaire. But I think it would be fascinating to trace Baudelaire's influence on German literature more in detail than hitherto, even down to the presence of peculiarities of his style and imagery, and to find out, for instance, how many of the common pet words of our poets like gulf, angel, autumn, blue, island, noon, perfume, lust, sun, poison, ennui, jewels, satan and god are really due to Baudelaire.

Maybe that the final evaluation of Baudelaire's influence on German literature might then provide another proof for a thesis which I have always cherished, namely, that however much German poets owed in the course of centuries to French literature and however late they were, at times, in taking up important new trends from their western neighbours, they have always succeeded in equalling and sometimes even out-growing their models, in medieval, in the classical and perhaps even in modern poetry.

১। বাংলায় গান গাওয়া চলিতলেন। 'কবিতা লেখে শব্দ দিয়ে, শাবনা দিয়ে নয়,' আর 'যদিও শোষিত আঙুরের
[সামান্য কৃৎসন]'-এ তিনি সারা জীবন কাটিয়ে দিয়েছিলেন, তবু চৈতন্যের যে-বিকাশের নাম
ভাবনা, কবিতা-গোচনার সত্যই তাকে অস্বীকার করা যায় কিনা। এ-বিষয়ে আমার যোরভর সন্দেহ
আছে। ১৯৩৫ মাদ্রাসের উক্তিটি আক্ষরিক গ্রহণ করার কথা নয় আমাদের।

সম্প্রদায়ের প্রতিপত্তি ইত্যাদি তখন ইথ্যোরোপে এমন ভাবে চোখ ধাঁধিয়ে দিয়েছিলো
কবি, শিল্পী, সাংগীতিকরা সব সমাজচ্যুত, ত্রাতা ও নিঃসঙ্গ হ'য়ে পড়তে বাধ্য
হয়েছিলেন। বিশেষ ক'রে যশবিপ্লবের পরে যখন সব মানুষকে যন্ত্রের মতোই এক
ফাঁস ঢালাই ক'রে দেবার উদ্ভোগ হ'লো, তখন তারই প্রতিক্রিয়ায় সাহিত্য-শিল্পে
সব প্রতিবাদ ভেগে উঠেছিলো—শিল্পী-সাহিত্যিকরা দূরে স'রে গিয়ে বাস্তববাদের
প্রতন ও প্রস্তাব করেছিলেন। আর ছিলো নগর, ও নগরকেন্দ্রিক ছিন্নমূল মানুষ
১৯৪৭ বাংলাদেশে ১৯৪১ সাল পর্যন্ত প্রায় রাজত্ব করেছেন রবীন্দ্রনাথ; নানা আবিষ্কার
ও শিক্ষাতেই আমাদের পুরো উনিশ শতক কেটে গিয়েছে— শুধু উনিশ শতকই নয়,
বিশ শতকেরও অনেকটাই। উপনিবেশবাদের বিরুদ্ধে সংগ্রাম ছিলো একটা মস্ত ত্রুত;
হাজার জাতির ও জীবনের এত দিকে এত-কিছু করার সুযোগ ছিলো যে ইতালি,
যুক্ত ও বিরূপ হ'য়ে পড়ার অবকাশ ছিলো অনেকটাই কম। বিজ্ঞানগণের মতো
হস্তরচিত মানুষ বাংলাদেশে তখন সম্ভব ছিলো—এখন যা প্রায় কল্পনা ব'লে মনে
হয়। স্পষ্ট ক'রে কোনোদিনই এখানে যশবিপ্লব হয়নি—বিশ শতাব্দীর অনেকটা
সময় কেটে না-যাওয়া অবধি কল-কারখানার সঙ্গে আমাদের প্রত্যক্ষ কোনো যোগাযোগই
ছিলো না। এদেশের তাঁতিদের আঙুল কেটে ফেলে ম্যানচেস্টার থেকে বহু আনা হ'তো :
সবক্ষেত্রেই তা-ই হ'তো, ইংরেজরা এখান থেকে কাঁচা মাল নিয়ে গিয়ে নিজেদের
দেশে পণ্যসামগ্রী প্রস্তুত করতো, তারপর এখানে সে-সব বিকোতো : ঘহাঙ্গণ থাকে
বলে তা স্পষ্ট ক'রে কখনো হয়নি। কিছু বোল্‌লেয়ারের বয়েস যখন তিরিশ পেরোয়নি,
তখন ইথ্যোরোপে যশবিপ্লব হ'য়ে গেছে, ফরাশিদেশে ফেব্রুয়ারি বিপ্লব ঘটে গেছে,
মার্কস ও এঙ্গেলস-এর সমাজবাদী ইশতেহার বেরিয়েছে, দ্বিতীয় প্রজাতন্ত্রের প্রতিষ্ঠা
ও পতন শেষ, আর বাস্তবশিল্পী জর্জ উজ্জীন ওসমান পার্সী নগরের রূপান্তর ঘটিয়ে
ফেলেছেন—নগরও কাকে বলে, সে-সময় বাঙালির স্পষ্ট কোনো অভিজ্ঞতাই ছিলো
না। জোব চারনক ১৬৯০ সালে যে-তিনটি গ্রাম কিনে কলকাতার পত্তনি করেছিলেন,
ভারতবর্ষ ও বাংলা দেশের রাজধানী হওয়া সত্ত্বেও তাকে কিছুতেই মফঃস্বল শহর

২ ১৮৭৯ সালে বঙ্কিমচন্দ্র 'সাম্য' বইটি বেরিয়েছিলো, কিন্তু পরে বঙ্কিমচন্দ্র নিজেই তাঁর এই বইটির প্রচার
রহিত করেন—কেবল “বঙ্গদেশের কৃষক” নামে এই বইটির একটিমাত্র অংশ পরে তিনি ‘বিবিধ প্রবন্ধ’র
অন্তর্ভুক্ত করেন। বঙ্কিমচন্দ্র এই হার্ম্য পরিবর্তনকে লক্ষ্য করলে তৎকালীন বাংলায়শকে চেনা যেতে পারে।

৩ ‘হতোম প্যাচার নকশা’, ‘রামতলু লাহিড়ী ও তৎকালীন বঙ্গসমাজ’, বিপিনবিহারী ভট্টাচার্য সম্পাদিত ‘পুরাতন
প্রসঙ্গ’ ইত্যাদি বই পড়লে শহর কলকাতাকে নগর ব'লে ঘোটেই মনে হয় না—বরং মনে হয় কোনো
মফঃস্বল শহর বা বড়ো গ্রাম। অতুলচন্দ্র ভট্টাচার্য তাঁর সম্পাদিত ‘Studies in the Bengal Renaissance’
গ্রন্থের ভূমিকায় (পৃঃ XI) সেই জগুই বাংলাদেশের তথাকথিত নবজাগরণকে ‘parochial’ ব'লে
অভিহিত করেছেন।

৬১৬ অল্প-কিছু ব'লে মনে হয় না। এখন যেখানে যাদবপুর বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়, আজ যেমনকি পঁচিশ বছর আগেও সেখানে—ও তার আশপাশে—জঙ্গল ছিলো—কিছু-একটি বাড়ি দেখা যেতো কি যেতো না। কাছেই বোদলেয়ারের জগৎ যে নিমিত্ত ও তৈরি, রচিত ও কৃত্রিম, যেটা মদ ও মৃত্যুর জগৎ, যেখানে দুঃখ ও উগ্রতা, যেখানে ইন্দ্রিয়বিলাস রহস্যময়, যেখানে চৈতন্য আত্মভেদী ও হৃদপিড়িত, সেই জগৎ বাংলাদেশে কল্পনাভীত ছিলো। রবীন্দ্রনাথ প্রথমত ও প্রধানত কবি, কিন্তু শুধুমাত্র কবি ব'লেই তাঁকে ভাবতে পারি না।^{১০} দেশের ও দশের নানা সমস্যা সময় তিনি পুরোভাগে দাঁড়িয়েছেন, প্রতিষ্ঠা করেছেন ব্রহ্মচর্য আশ্রম ও বিশ্ববিদ্যালয় স্থাপিত করেছেন সনস্কৃত বাহ্য আর কৃষি ও কর্ম বিদ্যালয়, অংশ নিয়েছেন জাত আন্দোলনে ও বহুবিধ কর্মকাণ্ডে। কবি কেবলমাত্র কবিই হবেন—এটা বাংলাদেশে সেই আবহাওয়ায় মোটেই সম্ভব ছিলো না। বোদলেয়ার নয়, ভিক্টর উগোর সঙ্গে কবির আত্মীয়তা তখন বেশি সম্ভব ছিলো। ত্রাণ প্রভাবের কথা ধর্তব্যো না—এনে বলা যায় যে উপদেশ, পরামর্শ, কর্মসাধনা—বাঙালি সনীষার পক্ষে তখন এ-সব ত্যাগ করা সম্ভব ছিলো না। ঊনবিংশ শতাব্দীর প্রায় সমস্ত নামজাদা লেখকই তখন সামাজিক ও রাজনৈতিক বিষয়ে আকৃষ্ট হয়েছিলেন, তারা প্রায় সবাই ছিলেন উদারনৈতিক মানবতাবাদে বিশ্বাসী, আর অধিকাংশই তৎকালীন ইংল্যান্ডের সমস্ত আদর্শকে মিশিয়ে নিজেদের ক্ষেত্রে ব্যবহার করছিলেন। তারা ছিলেন দরাজহৃদয়, উদ্দীপ্ত আনন্দবাদী, উচ্ছ্বাসপ্রবণ, তবপ্রিয় ও শ্রেণীসম্মোহের ছাঙ্কনামান নহির।

যে-সব জন্তু-জানোয়ার, ভাঁড় ও বিদূষক, পাগলিনী, ভিনদেশী বেস্তা, রে মাতাল, ভিগিরি, লম্পট ও নাস্তিমানরা বোদলেয়ারের কবিতায় ভিড় ক'রে অসংখ্য কবির প্রতিরূপ হ'য়ে উঠেছে, নাগরিক জীবনের যে-সব উপাদান সেখানে লক্ষ্যী-মে-যান্ত্রিকতা ও ভণ্ডামি, দুঃখ ও দারিদ্র্য, ছলনা ও হতাশা বোদলেয়ারের মেদ-ক্লেশ-মেদের আলয় গ'ড়ে তুলেছে, রবীন্দ্রশাসিত বাংলা কবিতায় বিশ শতকের তৃতীয় দশক পর্যন্ত তা অকল্পনীয় ও নিবিষ্ট ছিলো। সেই জন্তুই সত্যোদয় দস্ত কি মোহিতলা মল্লমদার, শ্রী অরবিন্দ কি নলিনীকান্ত গুপ্ত সত্ত্বও বিশ শতকের মাঝামাঝি পর্যন্ত বাংলা কবিতায় বোদলেয়ারের কোনো প্রত্যক্ষ বা পরোক্ষ অভিঘাত চোখে পড়ে না। বোদলেয়ার একজন বড়ো কবি, কিন্তু দূরবর্তী ও তাৎক্ষণিক—হয়তো এই

^{১০} এটাই বোধ হয় সাধারণ মত। হয়তো সেইজন্তুই শ্রী সত্যজিৎ রায় রবীন্দ্রনাথের উপর তাঁর তথ্যচিত্রে রবীন্দ্রনাথকে কবি ছাড়া আর প্রায় সব ভূমিকাতেই বিস্তৃতভাবে দেখিয়েছেন। আর শতবার্ষিকী উপলক্ষে গণপরিষদে রবীন্দ্রনাথকে নিয়ে সেই জন্তুই বোধ হয় আদর্শ, মঙ্গলবোধ, আত্ম ইত্যাদি বড়ো-বড়ো কথা বলা গ'লো।

ধারণা তখন প্রবল ছিলো। অস্তুত মতোজ্ঞানই যে-ভাবে তীর্থে-তীর্থে ঘুরে মন্তঃপুত
সলিল সংগ্রহ করেছেন, তাতে এ-কথা মনে-হওয়া মোটেই বিচিত্র বা অব্যভাবিক
নয়।

৩ বুদ্ধদেব বহু ও তাঁর অনুবাদ

বুদ্ধদেব বহুর ডগা ১৯০৮ সালে; 'বন্দীর বন্দনা' যখন বেরিয়েছে, তখনও তাঁর
বয়স কুড়ি ছোঁয়নি। কিন্তু ততদিনে প্রথম মহামুগ্ধ ও তক্তনিত ইত্যাদি, ক্ষয় ও
মানিতে ভরে গেছে ইয়োরোপ, ভারতবর্ষে গুরু হয়েছে সত্যগ্রহের প্রথম ধাপ,
ততদিনে পাশ্চাত্য ভাষা ও সভ্যতার চর্চাও এ-দেশে অনেকটাই বয়োপ্রাপ্ত হয়েছে।
আর বাংলাদেশে ততদিনে ভেঙে যাচ্ছে একাত্তরতী পরিবার নামক প্রতিষ্ঠান, চাকুরিজীবী
মধ্যবিত্তের সংখ্যা ক্রমেই বেড়ে যাচ্ছে, ভারতীয় রাজনীতিতে অস্থান হয়েছে
ডাক্তার আশেদকারের, আর ইয়োরোপের সঙ্গে যাতায়াত ও সংস্রবও অনেকটাই
বেড়ে গিয়েছে। ব্রিটিশ রাজশক্তির বিরুদ্ধে আন্দোলনে ভারতীয়রা যখন বহির্জগতে
সাহায্য চেয়েছে, সে-সব ক্ষেত্রে তাদের ভরসা স্থল হয়েছে মার্কিনমূলক, জরমানি
সংবাদে ফরাশিদেশ।

এই পরিপ্রেক্ষিতে 'বন্দীর বন্দনা'র কথা কল্পনা করা যাক। এই বইতে ঘোষণা
করা হয়েছে শিল্পী বস্তুত ইন্দ্রের প্রতিদ্বন্দ্বী, কেননা কামকে সে রূপান্তরিত
তপ করতে চাচ্ছে প্রেমে—চাচ্ছে নির্গাণ। প্রেমকেই শিল্প ব'লে ঘোষণা করা হয়েছে
মা-এখানে, ইঙ্গিত আছে দেহ ও মনের নিরন্তর ক্ষুদ্রের। বিশেষভাবে এই তথ্যটির
উল্লেখ করছি এই জন্য যে 'কঙ্কবতী', 'পৃথিবীর পথে', 'নতুন পাতা' ইত্যাদি কবিতার
বইয়ের মধ্যে অনেক সন্ধান ও হাংড়ানি আছে বটে, কিন্তু, তৎসবেরও, শিল্পের জন্য
এই সন্ধান চিরকালই-বুদ্ধদেব বহুর রচনায় একটি প্রধান স্তর ব'লে চেনা যাবে,
পরবর্তী যুগে এমনকি একমাত্র স্তর হিসেবেও আবিষ্কার করা যেতে পারে। এছাড়া
ছিলো অনেক ছোটোখাটো উল্লেখ ও ইঙ্গিত, বাংলা কবিতায় যার অমুপ্রবেশ
এতকাল নিষিদ্ধ ছিলো। আত্মভেদী চৈতন্তের এই নিরন্তর সন্ধানের ফলেই ক্রমে

শেলি, কীটস, গার্ডার্ড মর্গারথ বা ব্রাউনিংয়ের যে-প্রভাব বাংলা কবিতায় সঞ্চারিত হয়, তার কারণ হয়তো এই যে
ইংরেজি ভাষার চর্চা এ-দেশে রাজশক্তির পোষকতা পেয়েছিলো। রবীন্দ্রনাথই বলেছিলেন যে ইংরেজের ববলে
করাশিরা এ-দেশ দখল করলে আমাদের উপর যে-পাশ্চাত্য অভিযাত হ'তো, তা প্রধানত হ'তো করাশি
রচিত। এখানে আরো উল্লেখযোগ্য, রবীন্দ্রনাথের পরে ধীরে ধীরে প্রথম নতুন ধরনের কবিতা লেখার চেষ্টা
করেছিলেন, তাঁরা প্রত্যেকেই ছিলেন ইংরেজি ভাষা ও সাহিত্যের ছাত্র : জীবনানন্দ, সুধীন্দ্রনাথ, অনির
ক্রবর্তী, বিষ্ণু দে ও বুদ্ধদেব বহু। এটা কি নেহাৎই কাকতাল ?

জানা অংশ কিছু বলে মনে হয় না। এখন যেখানে খান্দাপুর বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়, আজ
 কখনো পশ্চিম বছর আগেও সেখানে—ও তার আশপাশে—জঙ্গল ছিলো—ক
 একটি বাড়ি দেখা যেতো কি যেতো না। কাজেই বোদলেয়ারের জগৎ যো
 গিনিং ও তৈরি, রচিত ও কৃত্রিম, যেটা মন ও মৃত্যুর জগৎ, যেখানে দুঃখ বে
 উৎসাহ। যেখানে ইঞ্জিনিয়ারিং রহস্যময়, যেখানে চৈতন্য আত্মভেদী ও হৃদয়পিড়িত
 সেই জগৎ বাংলাদেশে বহুনাভীত ছিলো। রবীন্দ্রনাথ প্রথমত ও প্রধানত কবি—
 কিছু অনুভব কবি বলেই তাকে ভাবতে পারি না। দেশের ও দেশের নানা সমস্যা
 সমস্যা মন পুরোভাগে দাঁড়িয়েছেন, প্রতিষ্ঠা করেছেন ত্র্যমুখ আশ্রয় ও বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়
 আশ্রয় করেছেন সমন্বয় ব্যাক আর কৃষি ও কর্ম বিদ্যালয়, অংশ নিয়েছেন জা
 আশ্রয়নে ও বহুবিধ কর্মকাণ্ডে। কবি কেবলমাত্র কবিই হবেন—এটা বাংলাদেশে
 সেই খান্দাপুর মোটেই সম্ভব ছিলো না। বোদলেয়ার নয়, ভিক্টর উগোর স
 কবিতা খান্দাপুর তখন বেশি সম্ভব ছিলো। ত্র্যমুখ প্রভাবের কথা ধর্তব্যো না—এনে
 নগা যায় যে উপদেশ, পরামর্শ, কর্মসাধনা—বাঙালি মনীষার পক্ষে তখন এ-সব ত
 করা সম্ভব ছিলো না। উনবিংশ শতাব্দীর প্রায় সমস্ত নামজাদা লেখকই তখন সামাজি
 ও রাজনৈতিক বিষয়ে আকৃষ্ট হয়েছিলেন, তারা প্রায় সবাই ছিলেন উদারমৈ
 মানব মনোবোধে বিশ্বাসী, আর অধিকাংশই তৎকালীন ইংল্যান্ডের সমস্ত আদর্শকে
 মাপদণ্ডে নিজেদের ক্ষেত্রে ব্যবহার করছিলেন। তারা ছিলেন দরাজহৃদয়, উদ
 আদর্শবাদী, উচ্ছ্বাসপ্রবণ, তত্ত্বপ্রিয় ও শ্রেণীসম্বোধের ছাঙ্কনামান নজির।

যেমন জন্তু-জানোয়ার, ভাঁড় ও বিদূষক, পাগলিনী, ভিনদেশী বেস্তা, রে
 গাংগাল, ভিগিরি, লম্পট ও নাস্তিমানরা বোদলেয়ারের কবিতায় ভিড় করে অ
 কবিতা প্রতিরূপ হয়ে উঠেছে, নাগরিক জীবনের যে-সব উপাদান সেখানে লক্ষ্য
 যে খান্দাপুর ও ভগ্নামি, দুঃখ ও দারিদ্র্য, ছলনা ও হতাশা বোদলেয়ারের মেদ-ক্লেশ
 আদর্শ আলয় গড়ে তুলেছে, রবীন্দ্রশাসিত বাংলা কবিতায় বিশ শতকের তৃতী
 লক্ষ্য সমস্যা অকল্পনীয় ও নিষিদ্ধ ছিলো। সেই জন্তুই সত্যোদয় দত্ত কি মোহিতলা
 লক্ষ্যমান, শ্রী অরবিন্দ কি নলিনীকান্ত গুপ্ত সবেও বিশ শতকের মাঝামাঝি পর্যন্ত
 বাংলা কবিতায় বোদলেয়ারের কোনো প্রত্যক্ষ বা পরোক্ষ অভিঘাত চোখে পড়ে
 না। বোদলেয়ার একজন বড়ো কবি, কিন্তু দূরবর্তী ও তাৎক্ষণিক—হয়তো এই

৪ নোটঃ এখানে এম সাধারণ মত। হয়তো সেইজন্তুই শ্রী সত্যজিৎ রায় রবীন্দ্রনাথের উপর তাঁর তথ্যচিত্রে
 রবীন্দ্রনাথ ও কবি ভাঁড় আর প্রায় সব ভূমিকাতেই বিস্তৃতভাবে দেখিয়েছেন। আর শতবার্ষিকী উপলক্ষে
 পরিকল্পিত। রবীন্দ্রনাথকে নিয়ে সেই জন্তুই বোধ হয় আদর্শ, মঙ্গলবোধ, আত্ম ইত্যাদি বড়ো-বড়ো কথা
 বলা হ'ল।

ধারণাই তখন প্রবল ছিলো। অশ্রুত সত্যোক্তনাম যে-ভাবে তীর্থে-তীর্থে ঘুরে মন্ত্র-পুত
সলিল সংগ্রহ করেছেন, তাতে এ-কথা মনে-হওয়া মোটেই বিচিত্র বা অস্বাভাবিক
নয়।

চা'

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তার কবিতায় ভিড় ক'রে এসেছে 'চলিশ ও মংস্ত্রীষী, ব্যাঙ, জোনাকি প্রভৃতি; ক্রমশঃ তুচ্ছ, অবহেলিত, নিগিহ বস্তু ও প্রাণীর আনাগোনা হ'তে লাগলো কবি ও কবিতার প্রতীক হিণেবে। আর সমস্ত চরছাড়া, বাউড়ুলে, ছোটোপাটো সাধারণ নান্দ্য, হেলাফেলার লোক— তারাও ধুরে-ধুরে এলো তার রচনায়। এককালে তার উপজ্ঞাসে ছিলো কিশোরপ্রতিভা, বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ের উজ্জ্বল রত্ন, স্পর্শাতুর প্রচণ্ড নান্দ্য— কিন্তু পরে গল্পে-উপজ্ঞাসেও হারিয়ে-মাওয়া, ক'রে-পড়া, অবহেলিত, গোপন অস্থিত-ভোগা লোকজনের আনাগোনা হ'তে লাগলো।

শিল্প, আধুনিক ভগতে শিল্পীর স্থান, শিল্পীর ভূমিকা ও স্বাধীনতা ইত্যাদি বিষয় প্রথম থেকেই বুদ্ধদেব বস্তুর রচনায় ছিলো বলেই বোদলেয়ারকে 'আবিষ্কার-করা' তার পক্ষে সম্ভব হয়েছিলো। অরুণ মিত্র প্রমুখ ফরাসিভাষী অন্তর্বাদকের চেহেও বুদ্ধদেব বস্তুর অনুবাদ যে অদিকতর মার্থক, তার কারণ বুদ্ধদেব বস্তু বোদলেয়ারে দেখেছেন নিজেরই ভাবনার নিজেরই সন্ধানের প্রকাশ— তার ফলে বোদলেয়ারকে আত্মসাৎ বা স্বীকরণ করা, অনুবাদ-কবিতাকেও বাংলা ভাষার ভালো কবিতায় রূপান্তরিত করা, তার পক্ষে অনেকের চেয়ে বেশি সম্ভব হয়েছে। যারা ফরাসি ভাষেন, তাঁদের পক্ষে তর্ক তোলা সম্ভব যে অনেক ক্ষেত্রেই বুদ্ধদেব বস্তুর তরজনা আঙ্গরিকভাবে মূল ফরাসির মতো নয়। কিন্তু কবিতার ভালো অনুবাদের প্রথম রূতা, যে-ভাষায় অনূদিত হচ্ছে সে-ভাষাতেও তাকে প্রথমত ও প্রধানত কবিতা হ'তে হবে— এবং ভালো অনুবাদ একটা গবেষণাকর্মের মতো, মূল কবির অভিপ্রায় তাতে নতুনভাবে আবিষ্কৃত হয়, পাওয়া যায় নতুন অন্তরাখ্যান, নতুন উদ্ভাস। বোদলেয়ার ও দস্ত্যেভস্কি যেমনভাবে এডগার অ্যালান পোকে আবিষ্কার ও অনুবাদ করেছিলেন, বুদ্ধদেব বস্তুর বোদলেয়ার অনুবাদ একদিক থেকে সে-রকম অস্থঃসম্ব ও ফলপ্রসূ একটি ঘটনা। মূলের মিলবিস্তার, ছন্দোবৈচিত্র্য, শব্দকগঠন ইত্যাদির কথা দিয়েও বোদলেয়ারীয় আভাস দেবার চেষ্টা অত্যন্ত কার্যকরী হয়েছে। পনেরো বছরেরও বেশি সময় ধ'রে অনবরত সংশোধন, পরিশোধন ও পরিমার্জনার দ্বারা বোদলেয়ারের অনুবাদকে তিনি বাংলা ভাষার সম্পত্তি ক'রে তোলার চেষ্টা করেছেন।

৯১সম্রত এখানে বাংলাদেশের অন্ত-একটি অনুবাদকর্মের কথা তোলা যেতে-পারে। শ্রী সত্যজিৎ রায় বখন রবীন্দ্রনাথের "নষ্টনীড়"-কে চলচ্চিত্রের ভাষায় 'চাকলতা'-রূপে তরজমা করলেন, তখন এ-রকম অভিযোগ উত্থিত হয়েছিলো সত্যজিৎ রায় মোটেই রবীন্দ্রনাথকে অনুসরণ করেননি। এই অভিযোগের উত্তরে 'পরিচর' পত্রিকায় সত্যজিৎ রায় বলেছিলেন যে যারা এই অভিযোগ তুলেছেন, তাঁরাই 'চাকলতা'র রবীন্দ্রনাথের নাম দেখতে না-পেলে সত্যজিৎ রায়কে কুস্তিলবৃত্তির দায়ে কাঠগড়ায় চাপায়েন। যারা বলেন বুদ্ধদেব বস্তুর অনুবাদে বোদলেয়ার অনুপস্থিত, তাঁদের কাছে প্রশ্ন: অনুবাদগুলির সঙ্গে বোদলেয়ারের সংগ্রহ অনুসন্ধে থাকলে, এই অনুবাদ-কাজকে তারা কী বলতেন?

এই তথ্য ছাড়াও আরো-একটি ঐতিহাসিক তথ্য লক্ষ করা যাক। এটা আজ 'অবিসংবাদিত' যে বুদ্ধদেব বহু সম্পাদিত 'প্রগতি' ও 'কবিতা' বাংলাদেশে আধুনিক কবিতার প্রচারের প্রধান বাহন ছিলো। প্রবন্ধের পর প্রবন্ধ লিখে তিরিশ বছরেরও বেশি সময় ধরে তিনি বাংলাদেশের আধুনিক কবিদের প্রতিষ্ঠিত করার চেষ্টা করেছিলেন। জীবনানন্দ, সুবীন্দ্রনাথ, অমিয় চক্রবর্তী, বিষ্ণু দে, সমর সেন, শ্রভাষ মুখোপাধ্যায়—প্রত্যেকের সংক্ষেপে তিনি নিরন্তর আলোচনা করেছেন; ব্যাখ্যা আলোচনা অন্তরাখ্যান—সবদিক থেকেই তাঁর সক্রিয়তা। প্রায় একটি প্রাতিষ্ঠানিক অঙ্কঠানে পরিণত হয়েছে: কবিতা যে সাময়িক পত্রের পাদপুরণের জন্য লেখা হয় না, কবিতাকে যে নিতুল ও স্ফটিক-ভাবে ছাপা দরকার, কবিতার জন্য উপযুক্ত পারিশ্রমিক দেয়া উচিত—ইত্যাদি দাবি তিনি বারে-বারে তুলেছেন, এ-সব সম্ভবও করিয়েছেন। এমনকি কবিতার জন্য ভক্তও জুটিয়েছেন তিনি।

সেই বুদ্ধদেব বহুর বোল্লেয়ার অম্ববাদ যখন 'কবিতা'য় বেরুচ্ছিলো, বোল্লেয়ার সংক্ষেপে তাঁর প্রবন্ধ ও টোকা, কালপঞ্জি ও জীবনীপঞ্জি যখন তিনি রচনা করছিলেন, তখন তরুণ কবিদের পক্ষে বোল্লেয়ারকে উপেক্ষা বা অস্বীকার করা মোটেই সম্ভব ছিলো না। বুদ্ধদেব বহু বোল্লেয়ারকে আনিকার করেছিলেন নিজের জন্য; যে- 'অন্তরীক্ষ প্রভ'র দামত বোল্লেয়ার কোনোদিনও মানতে চাননি, বুদ্ধদেব বহুও তাকে বার-বার অস্বীকার করতে চেয়েছেন; বোল্লেয়ারের মতো তিনি শুনেছিলেন নিজেরই কোনো-কোনো ভাবনার প্রতিধ্বনি, নিজেরই সমর্থন। কাজেই বোল্লেয়ারের অম্ববাদ তে একদিক থেকে ছিলো তাঁর আত্মপ্রকাশ ও আত্মসম্মানেরই উপায়। সেই জন্যই 'যে-আপার আলোর অধিক' ও 'মরচে-পড়া পেরেকের গান'-এ অধিরলভানে এই 'দূরবর্তী' কবিকে কাজে খাটিয়েছেন তিনি। সেই জন্যই 'পাতাল থেকে আলাপ', 'বাবু ও বিবি' প্রভৃতি রচনায় বোল্লেয়ারের সংক্রাম এমন তীব্র ও স্বর্ণীয়।

কিন্তু তরুণ কবিদের কাছে বোল্লেয়ার বড়ো প্রচণ্ড ও বিপুল-রূপে অভিব্যক্ত হ'লেন। ততদিনে জমিও তৈরি হ'য়ে গেছে। যুদ্ধ, মহাস্থর, দাঙ্গা, দেশভাগ, স্বাধীনতাপ্রাপ্তি ও মোহভঙ্গ, বিভিন্ন রাজনৈতিক দল ও নেতার জোচ্ছুরি, সি.এম.পি.ও. প্রতিষ্ঠা, কলকাতার সর্বগ্রাসী পৃথুলতা—এই সমস্ত দেখে যারা বড়ো হয়েছেন, তাঁদের পক্ষে 'স্বভাবতই বোল্লেয়ারে নিগঞ্জিত হ'তে কোনো বাধা ছিলো না। কিন্তু কী ছিলো বোল্লেয়ারে, যেটা এই অরাজক অবস্থায় টান দিলে?

রূপকল্পের দিক থেকে 'ক্লাসিক ও রোমান্টিকের চিরাচরিত বৈতক্যে' বোল্লেয়ার 'লুপ্ত ক'রে দেন'। 'হন্দোবন্ধের দাড়া', মিলের বিশ্ব ও পঞ্চাঙ্গি, নিয়মনিষ্ঠ মনেটের প্রতি অমর আশঙ্কি তাঁর—এই সবই নিতুলভাবে ক্লাসিক লক্ষণ, কিন্তু এই কঠিন

রূপকল্পের মধ্যে তিনি সঞ্চারিত করেছিলেন রোমাটিকতার আত্মা— এক বস্তুপীড়িত আত্মভেদী চৈতন্য।^{১৭} অর্থাৎ প্রকরণ বা রূপকল্পের দিক থেকে বোদলেয়ারের আঁটো, কঠিন ও নির্মিত জগৎ এক অদিশ্রাম পরিশ্রমের ইঙ্গিত দেয়— সনেট বা সনেটকল্প কবিতার ছন্দোবন্ধের দৃঢ়তা, পরিমিত প্রসার, ও মিলের বিচ্ছিন্ন তথাকথিত রোমাটিক উচ্ছ্বাস ও অতিকথনের বিরোধী— দিল এ-ক্ষেত্রে বন্ধন নয়, অস্ত্র শব্দের মধ্য থেকে অনিবাধ্যতম শব্দগুলিকে আবিষ্কার করার সূত্র; নির্দিষ্ট চরণসংখ্যা আছে বলেই ‘বন্ধন’কে ছাড়িয়ে পড়তে না-দিয়ে সংহত ক’রে ওই পরিমিত প্রসারের দ’রে রাখতে হয়, ছন্দ বা মাত্রাবন্ধনও ওই ভাবেই শব্দের অনিবাধ্যতম সন্নিবেশকে অরারিত ও ‘একমাত্র’ ক’রে তোলে— যেমনভাবে কোনো ছোটো বিস্ফোরক তৈরি হয় নির্দিষ্ট প্রক্রিয়া মাত্র ক’রে, কিন্তু যার প্রচণ্ড বিস্ফোরণ অনেকপাশি জ্বালগাকে ছিন্নভিন্ন ক’রে ফালে, তেমনিভাবে এই ছোটো ও আঁটো সনেট-জাতীয় কবিতাগুলি অস্থলীন প্রচণ্ড চৈতন্যকে ধ’রে রেখেছে, পড়বামাত্র বা কবিতার পাঠকের মনের মধ্যে নানা স্পন্দন ছড়িয়ে দেয়। কবি তো ইচ্ছা ক’রেই বেছে নেন সনেটের ‘কঠিন’ রূপকল্প— কেউ তো আর তাঁকে মাথার দিবা দিয়ে সনেট লিখতে দলে না। লক্ষ করা যাবে, ‘যে-আধার আলোর অধিক’-এ সনেট-জাতীয় কবিতাই সবচেয়ে বেশি, একটি কি দুটি কবিতা তার ব্যতিক্রম। কাব্যভাষা সম্বন্ধে আপাতত কোনো মন্তব্য না-ক’রেও আমরা যখন ওই বইয়ের রূপকল্প বা অস্থলীন ভাবনাগুলোকে লক্ষ করি, তখন বোদলেয়ারের সংক্রান্ত টের পাওয়া যায়। কাগজকুড়ানি, ‘ড্যাণ্ডি’ বা শৌখিন কবি যার পাড়াবির ইঙ্গি কড়া রাখতে বলা হচ্ছে, অসুস্থ শিল্পী ও গৃহস্থের ঈর্ষা, ‘দেহময়, দেহচ্যুত জ্যামুক্তির চকল নিরিখ,’ কবিতা নামক ‘অচিকিৎস্তু করণের ব্যাধি’ ইত্যাদি নানা চুপক আমাদের বোদলেয়ারের কথা মনে করিয়ে দেয়। তারা মানে এই নয় যে এই কবিতাগুলো বোদলেয়ারেই ভরপুর— যেমন বোদলেয়ার তেমনি এখানে রিলকে, মালার্মে, ভালেরি প্রভৃতির ইঙ্গিত ও/বা উল্লেখ বহুক্ষেত্রেই প্রাপ্য। এমনকি আধুনিক উপজ্ঞাসেরও কোনো-কোনো অতুষ্ট বা ভাবনাও লক্ষণীয়, কিন্তু এই সবই উপাদান— এই সমস্ত কিছুকে ব্যবহার ক’রেই ‘আলোকপ্রাপ্তি’র চেয়েও ‘বৃহত্তর মানস-অন্ধকার’কে কবি গ’ড়ে তুলেছেন। তবু বোদলেয়ারের কবিতা অনুবাদ করার সময়েই এই কবিতাগুলো রচিত হচ্ছিলো বলেই হয়তো আমাদের মনে হয় বোদলেয়ারকেই তিনি সবচেয়ে বেশি কাজে খাটিয়েছেন। এই জগতেরই স্মারক ‘বাবু ও বিবি’— আক্ষরিকভাবে ‘ক্ষুদ্র’ বাবু প্রাক্সিটিলিসের নির্মিত মূর্তির মতোই

^{১৭}বুদ্ধময় বসু, ‘শার্ল বোদলেয়ার : তাঁর কবিতা’-র ভূমিকা (১৯৬৭), পৃ ৭

সুন্দর—বিছানায় শুতে খাবার সময়ও তার চুলের ভাঁজ ভাঙে না এত ড্যাঙি—
যে মৃত্যু মইতে রাঙি, তবু নিজের নিমিত্ত চুগৎ ছেড়ে দিতে রাজি নয়—এই
জাতীয় তথাকথলো বোললেয়ারকেই মনে করিয়ে দেয় আমাদের।

কিন্তু তরুণ কবিদের বেলায়, যারা প্রধানত বুদ্ধদেব বহু-মারকৎ বোললেয়ারকে
চিনেছেন, প্রভাবটা হ'লো অত্যাধিক। বোললেয়ার—ও বুদ্ধদেব বহুর—কঠিন রূপবিশ্বাস
বা প্রকরণ মেইডানে কার লেদায় লেপা গেলো না—মনেট বা মনেটের মতো
অনিদিষ্ট প্রকরণ তরুণ বাঙালি কবিদের অনেকেরই ইচ্ছার সঙ্গে মেলে না, প্রকরণের মতো
যুগের অরাজকতা ঢুকে পড়েছে—বাপারটাকে হয়তো এইভাবে শনাক্ত করা যায়।
কিন্তু তৎসঙ্গে পূর্ববর্তী বাংলা কবিতা এমনকি কোনো-কোনো কবির পূর্ববর্তী
রচনার সঙ্গে—বোললেয়ারের বুদ্ধদেব বহু-কৃত অল্পবাদ বেকবীর পরের রচনা নিলিখে
দেখলে একটা সামান্য পরিবর্তন চোখে পড়ে, যেটা নেহাৎ অবহেলা করার মতো নয়।
এই পরিবর্তিত ও উপকৃত অবস্থাটাই এখানে লক্ষ করা হবে।

৪ উপাগন ও অসুখবেশ

কিন্তু তার আগে লক্ষ করা যাক বোললেয়ারের কবিতার মধ্যে কী ছিলো, যেটা
হঠাৎ সাম্প্রতিক বাংলা কবিতায় হুলস্থূল বাধিয়ে ঢুকে পড়লো। কবিতা ভাবনামত
বাপার নয়, সত্যিকথা; কিন্তু ভাবনা বা অভিজ্ঞতা ছাড়া ভালো কবিতা কখনও
নিজের পায়ে দাঁড়াতেও পারে না। এ-ক্ষেত্রে বরং জীবনানন্দর ছোট্ট একটা মন্তব্য
স্মরণ করা যাক, যেটা কবিতা সম্বন্ধে আমার ধারণা বোঝাতে সাহায্য করবে :
'কবিতা রসেরই বাপার, কিন্তু এক ধরনের উৎকৃষ্ট চিত্তের বিশেষ সব অভিজ্ঞতা
ও চেতনার জিনিস— শুধু কল্পনা বা একান্ত বুদ্ধির রস নয়।' এ-কথা মনে রেখে
বোললেয়ারের কবিতার দিকে তাকালে কতগুলো ধ্রুব ভাবনা বা leitmotif
আবিষ্কার করা যায় :

১. বোললেয়ারের কবিতাতেই প্রথম সমস্ত ক্লেশ গ্লানি ও পরিতাপ নিয়ে
আধুনিক নগরজীবনের চঞ্চলতা ধরা পড়েছিলো। এককালে রোমান্টিকরা
ছিলেন স্বভাব-সুন্দরের পূজারী, প্রায় সহজিয়া; কিন্তু বোললেয়ার সর্বত্র
কৃত্রিমতা, প্রসাধন, অলংকরণ অর্থাৎ শিল্পের ও চেতনার পূজা করেছেন—
তার শৌখিনতা বা 'ড্যাঙিপনা'র মূলকথাও এটা। সেই জেগেই বোললেয়ার

রচনা করেছেন উদ্ভিদহীন, দাত্তময়, প্রস্তররচিত এক পারী ও অলংকার-
মণ্ডিত, সজ্জিত, শোণিন বিবসনা।

২. বোদলেয়ারের কবিতা ভ'রে শুধু তাদেরই দেখা পাই যারা নির্বাসিত,
পরিত্যক্ত ও নিষাতিত ; অর্থাৎ সমাজ খাদের বাতিল ব'লে বস্তুতে
আস্তাকুঁড়ে কেলে দিচ্ছে, তাদেরই পূণ্যদান ব'লে বোদলেয়ার তাঁর
রচনায় বন্দনা করেছেন। এমনকি পাপীতাপী অভাঙ্গনেরাও, চৈতন্যের দ্বারা
আক্রান্ত ব'লে, তাঁর কাছে পূণ্যদান। এক্ষেত্রে ব্রাউনিং-এর সঙ্গে বোদলেয়ারের
তফাৎ এই যে ব্রাউনিং-এর নিঃশ্ব ও লালিত্বেরা সকলেই 'ইহলোকে
বেড়াতে এসেছিলো বৈতরণীর পরপার থেকে', এবং ব্রাউনিং 'খত পতিতের
তরফে ওকালতি করেছেন, তাদের প্রত্যেকের পদস্থলন ঘটেছিলো, হয়
অনিচ্ছায়, নয় নৈবদ্বিধাপ্রাপ্তে। এর প্রথমটা পরিগ্রহণ নয়, পলায়ন ; এবং
দ্বিতীয়টা অমৃদৃষ্টি নয়, অভিনয়, সেই ধরণের অহংকৃত অভিনয়, যার
সাহায্যে ধর্মধ্বজ উকিল আসামীর পক্ষে দাঁড়িয়ে কাজির উপরে ভোজবাজি
খাটায়।'^২

আর এই ভাবনাগুলো যে-সব শব্দের উপর ভর ক'রে আছে তাদের সংখ্যাও অতি
অল্প, এবং তাদের ব্যবহার পৌনঃপুনিক। বুদ্ধদেব বহু বাংলা অমুবাদে তাঁর প্রিয় শব্দগুলো
এই রকম : 'নির্বেদ', 'শূন্যতা', 'গম্বুজ' ; 'সমুদ্র', 'ভাঙ্গা', 'মাস্তুল' ; 'শব', 'কফিন', 'কবর',
'বহাল' ; 'তিক্ত', 'নদুর', 'কৃষ্ণ', 'শীতল', 'হৃগন্ধি' ; 'ডাইনিং', 'পিশাচী', 'ফিফস' ;
'গর্ভীর' ; 'বিলাসী', 'অন্ধকার', 'উজ্জল', 'রহস্যময়' ; 'বিষাদ', 'বিতৃষ্ণা'। বুদ্ধদেব বহু
আরো বলেছেন : বোদলেয়ারের 'কোনো পংক্তির শেষে "mer" (সমুদ্র) বা "amer"
(তিক্ত) থাকলে আমরা প্রায় ধ'রে নিতে পারি যে অঙ্কটি আসন্ন ; "l'énébre"
(অন্ধকার) ও "funèbre"-এর (funereal, বাংলায় শোকাবহ বলা যায়) সহবাসেও
অভ্যস্ত হ'তে হয় ; le-প্রত্যয়ান্ত যে-কোনো বিশেষ্যপদের কাছাকাছি "volupté"-র
(ইন্দ্রিয়বিলাস) ব্যবহারও, তাঁর রচনার সঙ্গে কিছুটা পরিচিত হ'লে, আর আশাতীত
থাকে না। আর তাঁর কাব্যের বিষয় হিসেবে...উল্লেখ... : বিষাদ, বিতৃষ্ণা ও নির্বেদ,
কামোন্মাদ ও কামদ্রোহ, ইন্দ্রিয়বিলাস ও "শয়তানপন্থা", দরিদ্র ও পতিতের জীবন,
মৃত্যু ও দূরপ্রয়াণ...।'^৩

বোদলেয়ারের কাব্যের বিষয় ব'লে বুদ্ধদেব বহু যে-তালিকাটি রচনা করেছেন,

^২মুখোপাধ্যায় দত্ত, 'কবিতা' "কাব্যের মূল্য" (১৯৬৪), পৃঃ ২৫

^৩বুদ্ধদেব বহু, 'শার্ল বোদলেয়ার : তাঁর কবিতা'-র ভূমিকা (১৯৬৭), পৃঃ ১৩

তার অখণ্ডিত কোনো-কোনোটিকে বাংলা কবিতায় আগেও দেখা গেছে, তবে সম্পূর্ণ অন্তর্ভাবে। মোহিতলাল মজুমদারের ভোগবাদ বা কামদোহ— যার জন্য তাঁকে 'ভাস্কর' বলা হয়েছে— বোদলেয়ারের থেকে একেবারেই আলাদা। শ্রী অরবিন্দ বোদলেয়ারের এই ইচ্ছাশক্তি ও কামোন্মাদনায় ভারতীয় ভাস্করতার প্রতিচ্ছবি দেখেছেন, আর সেই অর্থেই বোদলেয়ারকে তিনি ঋষিকল্প বলেছেন, কিন্তু তবুও যৌনবোধ ও বোদলেয়ারের কামোন্মাদনায় প্রবল প্রভেদ বিদ্যমান। দরিদ্র ও পতিতের জীবন যখন মতোক্রমাপ দত্ত ও মঙ্গল ইন্দ্রনাথের কবিতায় ফুটে উঠেছে, তখন তাতে উচ্চাঙ্গ ও ভাবালুতাই প্রদান হয়েছে। আমরা কল্পনাই করতে পারি না বোদলেয়ার কখনও 'দেখার'কে লক্ষ্য করে বসেছেন 'কে বলে তোমারে বস্তু অস্পৃশ্য অসুচি' বা দারিদ্র্যকে নিয়ে বিলাস করেছেন, 'হে দরিদ্র, তুমি মোরে করেছে নহান'। বরং বোদলেয়ারের চেতনায় সমস্তই অন্তর্ভাবে দেখা দিয়েছে। বুদ্ধদেব বসু তাঁর ভূমিকায় আলোচনা করে দেখিয়েছেন যে রবীন্দ্রনাথের জগদতাবোধ ও মৃত্যুচেতনার সঙ্গে বোদলেয়ারের দূরপ্রাণ ও মৃত্যুময়তার কোনো তুলনাই হতে পারে না— এই দু'জনের অভিজ্ঞতা দূরবর্তী ও দু-মেরুলীন বলেই এই উৎসাহগুলো আগামের যুগপৎ আকর্ষণ করে।

সব বিষয় নয়, সব শব্দও নয়, অথচ তবু মনে হয় এ-সব শব্দ ও বিষয়, এ-সব অভিজ্ঞতা ও চিন্তা কোনো-কোনো তরুণ কবির রচনায় অবিরলভাবে ছড়িয়ে আছে।

৫ পরিবর্তন নয়, পরিগ্রহণ

'প্রভাব' কথাটি যে অতীব রহস্যময়, এ-কথা বলে এই নিবন্ধের রচনা। কাছেই কোন-কোন আধুনিক বাঙালি কবি বোদলেয়ার দ্বারা আকৃষ্ট হয়েছেন, কারাই বা বোদলেয়ার সম্বন্ধে উদাসীন রয়েছেন, সে-তর্ক উত্থাপন করছি না। হয়তো বোদলেয়ারের রচনার যা বিষয়, তা স্বাভাবিক ভাবেই কারু-কারু রচনায় এসেছে। বিশেষ করে দেশের ও রাষ্ট্রের বিশৃঙ্খল অবস্থার মধ্যে যে-তরুণ কবিরা বড়ো হয়েছেন, যাদের মূল্যবোধ বিপর্যস্ত মূল্যমানের মতোই ধূলিসাৎ হয়েছে, যাদের পক্ষে এটো নগরজীবনের চৌহদ্দির মধ্যে 'অগ্রজের অটল বিশ্বাস' বজায় রাখা দুর্কর হয়ে উঠেছে, তাঁদের কারু-কারু প্রথম কবিতার সঙ্গে পরবর্তী কবিতার একটি বিপুল তফাৎ লক্ষ করা যায়— ইচ্ছা দেখা যায় তাঁদের কবিতায় এক হৃদয়কূল, বিপর্যস্ত, ভগ্নপ্রায় নগরজীবন ছায়া ফেলেছে এবং কবি ও শিল্পীর প্রতীক রূপে আবির্ভূত হয়েছে অজস্র তুচ্ছ,

বাতিল ও নষ্ট জিনিশ—এবং এই আকস্মিক পরিবর্তনের সমসাময়িক কালে যে-নতুন বাপার বাংলা সাহিত্য ঘটেছে, সেটা হচ্ছে বুদ্ধদেব বসু-র এই বিপুল ও চরম অগ্রবাদকর্ম। এর কারণ এমনও হ'তে পারে যে প্রথম হাত মকশো করার পর হঠাৎ একদিন এঁরা নিজেদের আবিষ্কার ক'রে ফেলেছেন। সত্য বটে, রবীন্দ্রনাথকে ও রবীন্দ্রনাথ হবার জন্ত 'দানগী' পর্যন্ত অপেক্ষা করতে হয়েছিলো, যদিও তাঁর পূর্ববর্তী রচনায় পরবর্তী বিকাশের ইঙ্গিত ও উপাদান অনেক লক্ষ করা যায়। এও ঠিক যে জীবনানন্দ ও 'স্বরা পালক' বলে বই লিখেছিলেন, স্বপ্নীন্দ্রনাথ লিখেছিলেন 'তথা'। অনিয়ম চক্রবর্তী অনেক দিন রবীন্দ্রনাথে আগ্রহ ছিলেন, আর বুদ্ধদেব বসু-র প্রথম কবিতার বইয়ের নাম ছিলো 'মনোবাণী'। কিন্তু আমাদের অবাক করেছে এই তথ্যটিই যে হঠাৎ বুদ্ধদেব বসু-র অগ্রবাদ প্রকাশিত হবার সঙ্গে-সঙ্গে কাক-কাক কবিতার আমূল পরিবর্তন। এ কি কাকতাল, না কি এই তথ্যগুলি পরস্পরের সঙ্গে নিগূঢ়ভাবে সম্পৃক্ত?

এমনিতে এ-কথা ঠিক যে বাংলা কবিতার পকাশের যুগে সমর সেনের মতো 'সম্রতিভ', ও 'আত্মতৃপ্ত' নাগরিকতার স্বযোগ ছিলো না: বরং মোটামুটিভাবে অনেকের কবিতাতেই নতুন একটি অসহিষ্ণু, নাগরিক, জনাকীর্ণ কিন্তু নিঃসঙ্গ ভগ্নতের দেখা পাওয়া যায়, যার ক্ষয় ও ভাঙনের বোধ নায়ে-মায়ে কেবল জীবনানন্দকে মনে করিয়ে দেয়, না-হ'লে তাকে হয়তো সম্পূর্ণই নতুন বলা যেতো। ব্যতিক্রম দু-একজন নিশ্চয়ই আছেন, কিন্তু তৎসঙ্গেও এটাই মোটামুটি বাংলা কবিতার আবহাওয়া ছিলো, যখন বুদ্ধদেব বসু-র তর্জমা গ্রন্থাকারে বেরলো।

এই অগ্রবাদগুচ্ছর প্রায় সঙ্গে-সঙ্গেই পর-পর বেরিয়েছিলো পবিত্র মুখোপাধ্যায়ের কবিতার বইগুলি: 'স্পর্শে অনেক মৃগ', 'মোহন তরলী', 'শবষাত্রা', 'হেমস্পের সনেট'। এই বইগুলির সর্বাঙ্গে বুদ্ধদেব বসু-র অগ্রবাদের ছাপ স্পষ্ট—ছন্দের বিস্তার, শব্দ সন্নিবেশ ও ধ্বনিসৌক্য, উপমা ও উৎপ্রেক্ষার ব্যবহার—সর্বত্রই প্রায় বোদলেয়ারের (বা বুদ্ধদেব বসু-র অগ্রবাদের) রোমস্থান দেখা যায় তাতে। আর যে-মানসভূমণ্ডল সেখানে আবিষ্কার করা যায় তাও হুবহু বোদলেয়ারীয় ভগ্নতকেই উদ্ঘাটিত ক'রে দেয়। এই নিবন্ধে অংশ তুলে-তুলে না-দেখালেও যে-কোনো পাঠক বইগুলোর পাতা ওলটালেই তা লক্ষ করতে পারবেন। কিন্তু যেহেতু কৃষ্ণিলবৃত্তির সঙ্গে সাহিত্যিক সংক্রাম ও অভিঘাতের একটা তফাত থেকেই যায়, সেটাই জ্ঞেই এই বইগুলি নিয়ে বিশেষভাবে আলোচনা করার কোনো প্রয়োজন নেই। এখানে বরং তরুণ কবিদের মধ্যে দু-একজনকে আমরা লক্ষ করার চেষ্টা করবো যাদের পূর্ববর্তী কবিতা ও বুদ্ধদেব বসু-র অগ্রবাদ-উদ্ভব কবিতায় আকস্মিক তীব্র পরিবর্তন লক্ষ করা যায়, কখনও

নরকি বোদলেয়ারীয় প্রতিধ্বনিও।

যেমন, স্থানীয় গল্পোপাখ্যানের প্রথম দিককার কবিতা মনে করা যাক, যেখানে
শ্রী বিদ্যাস প্রভার অনস্বীকার্যরূপে বিদ্যমান—তার পাশে 'আমি কী-রকমভাবে
চে আছি' বইয়ের কবিতাগুলো প্রায় আরেকজনের লেখা বলেই প্রতীয়মান হয়।

তার উপর্যুপ 'আত্মপ্রকাশ'-এ বন্ধুদের মধ্যে সারাক্ষণ হঠাৎ সবেও বিচ্ছিন্ন
না হাওয়ার মানসিক, দেশের কৃত্রিম স্বর্গ, আত্মভেদী চৈতন্য ইত্যাদি স্পষ্টরূপে
প্রতিফলিত। তার কবিতার দই দুটি দ্ব্যর্থার্থী নির্ভয়ে পড়লেই চিত্তাশ্রয় ও প্রকাশভঙ্গির
ধ্বনি প্রতীয়মান হবে। 'একা একে একে'র "কর্ণা-কে," "তুমি" "সপ্তপদী
ও আরো এক লাইন" বা 'শতভিমা' (১৮৭/১৩৬০) পত্রিকায় প্রকাশিত "প্রেমের
বিতা"র সঙ্গে 'আমি কী-রকমভাবে বেঁচে আছি' বইটির কবিতাগুলির মানসজগৎ

কালভাষায় (diction) দৃশ্যের ব্যবধান বিদ্যমান। এটাই কেবল স্পষ্টভাবে আমাদের
পক্ষে পড়ে যে স্থানীয় গল্পোপাখ্যানের কবিতার ইদানীস্থান তীব্রতা ও আত্মময় চৈতন্য
রো বছর আগেকার কবিতায় অল্পপস্থিত। এক যুগ সময়ের মধ্যে বিদ্যমান পরিবর্তন
হয়, কিন্তু তবু মনে হয় এটা ঠিক পরিবর্তন নয়, বিন্দু-বিন্দুই বোনো-এক
ভীর টানে কবিতা সঙ্গকে ধারণাই বদলে গিয়েছে। রূপকল্পের দিক থেকে ভাঙন
ভাঙ স্পষ্ট—কিন্তু একশো বছর পরে বোদলেয়ারের কোনো-কোনো ভাবনামাত্র ধারা
যেমন, তাদের কাছে বোদলেয়ারের চন্দ-মনের রূপদী বিকাশ আশা করাট অসম্ভব।
বোঝাযাতেও সত্যিকার কবি নিশ্চয়ই অতের অত্বতন করেন না, যতই কেননা
পর কবি দ্বারা আক্রান্ত হন। আত্মর রূপাণো কল্পিত কালেও বোদলেয়ারের কঠিন
পদী বিকাশ মানেননি, কিন্তু বোদলেয়ারকে অনেকটাই তিনি হুদে খাটিয়েছিলেন।
স্থানীয় গল্পোপাখ্যানের সাম্প্রতিক কবিতার আত্মভেদী চৈতন্যের ছায়াপাত ঘটেছে
তার 'আত্মপ্রকাশ' উপন্যাসে, সেইজন্যই কবিতার সঙ্গে জড়িয়েই সেই বইয়ের উল্লেখ
রা প্রয়োজন বিবেচনা করি। কবিতায় অনেক ক্ষেত্রেই এক ইন্দ্রিয়গত কঠিন
ত্রকল্প অল্পপস্থিত, বরং বিদেহ শব্দের তুলকালম সন্নিবেশ আর চীৎকার কি
গতোক্তিই এ-সব কবিতার বিষয়। কিন্তু বোদলেয়ারের পরে না-হ'লে কোন কবি ভাবতে
পারতেন যে তিনি কি-রকমভাবে বেঁচে আছেন, সেটা জগতের জরুরি বলে বিবেচিত
হবে। কবিরা পূর্ববর্তী কবিদের কাছে খাটান, কখনও বা নিজে আমূল বদলে গিয়েও
ই সংক্রামকে তীব্রভাবে উদ্ঘাটিত করেন—এমনকি অপরাপর কবিদের কাছ থেকে
রাসরি উপমা বা চিত্রকল্প নিয়েও নিজের মতো করে তুলে ধরতে পারেন।
তার পেরেক ছিল, পথে বড় কষ্ট' ১১ এই ভূলাদিদির নায়কভঙ্গীর উপমা সবেও,

১) স্থানীয় গল্পোপাখ্যানের 'আমি কী-রকমভাবে বেঁচে আছি', "আমার দানিক ঘেরা হস্তে ধার" (১৩৭২)

কিন্তু শক্তি চট্টোপাধ্যায়ের বেলায় সেই সংক্রামণ আরো স্পষ্ট। শক্তি চট্টোপাধ্যায়ের কবিতার বই 'হে প্রেম হে নৈশঙ্কা'র মুখপত্রের এই কণ সর্বজন সমক্ষে স্বীকৃত। 'প্রিয়তমা স্বন্দরী তনুারে / যে আমার উজ্জল উদ্ধার'১২ বা কবিতার এই নাম "পাতাল থেকে ডাকছি" স্পষ্ট ও প্রত্যক্ষ-ভাবে মনে করিয়ে দেয় বুদ্ধদেব বসুর অমৃতবাবু বোললেখ্যারের একটি কবিতার নাম : "পাতাল থেকে আমি ডেকেছি"। কিন্তু এ-র বক্তৃত্ত্বলো বাইরের গিলমাত্রই নয়, শব্দ, কাব্যভাষা, চিন্তার সূত্র নানাদিক থেকে অস্বত 'হে প্রেম হে নৈশঙ্কা'র মধ্যে বোললেখ্যারীঘ উপস্থিতি বারে-বারে হানা দেয় অথচ 'ফুলিঙ্গ সন্দান্দর' নামে শক্তি চট্টোপাধ্যায় যখন কবিতা লিপিতে শুরু করেছিলেন তখন তাঁর কবিতা ছিলো আস্থা ও উচ্চাশায় ভ্রাজ্জল্যমান— পকাশের যুগের সূচনা যে-ধরনের কবিতা লেগা হ'তো তারই অমৃতবর্তন। অথচ 'হে প্রেম হে নৈশঙ্কা' মধ্যে বোললেখ্যারের মদ ও মৃত্যুর ভগৎ, অসামান্যিক ভগৎ, খুঁজে মাতাল লম্পট ও অভাঙ্গনের ভগৎ পরিতপ্ত পাপীর ঈশ্বরদীর্ঘ ভগৎ দ্বার্থহীনভাবে প্রকাশিত। 'ভূমি কেবো প্রাকৃতিক আমি বসি কৃত্রিম জীবনে / শিল্পের প্রস্রাবরসে পাকে গড়, পাতাল নজ্জা বেশ'১৩ — তাঁর এই ঘোষণায় কি বোললেখ্যারেরই প্রতিধ্বনি শোনা যায় না? "নন্দবন্ধে", "পাতাল থেকে ডাকছি" "হেমস্টে", "সদর স্ট্রিট", "দেবদূত", "দেবতা গ্রাস" ইত্যাদি কবিতায় উদ্ভূতিযোগ্য এমন বহু চিন্তা ও পঙ্ক্তি পাওয়া যায় যার পাশাপাশি বোললেখ্যারের কবিতা অনায়াসেই স্থাপন করা চলে। কিন্তু তা না-ক'রে বরং সোচ্চারিত্ত্বি বাদে — এ-রকম পঙ্ক্তি তোলা যায়—

নয়ানে উন্মুক্তকেই - - - - - বুদ্ধ, বুদ্ধে লগ্ন অত্যাচারী ধীশু
নাহিল অনর পিঙুন নেঃ - - - - - দাঁতে চেপে উদাস বোদলেয়ার

उद्देशः ५।

১২ বুদ্ধদেব বহু (অনুবাদক), 'শাল বোম্বেরার : পরিবর্তন কবিতা', "স্টোত্র" (১৩৬৭)
১৩ শক্তি চট্টোপাধ্যায়, 'হে প্রেম হে নৈশদা', "নিয়তি"

রাঁগাবোর উৎক্লিষ্ট অণু গ্রাস করে কলহী ভেরলেন
লগাটে ধর্মীয় বৃক, ভূগের মূলের মতো জঘী

(স্বকৃত আলোচ্য/ 'হে প্রেম হে বৈশ্বনা')

বা এই ভারতীর অজ-আরো, তাই'নে কবি ও কবিতা, জীবন ও শিল্প ইত্যাদি সম্বন্ধে শক্তি চট্টোপাধ্যায়ের যে-পারমা দেখা যায় তাই সম্ভবত উত্তমর্ণ-অপমর্ণর সম্বন্ধটি স্পষ্ট দৃষ্টিতে তুলবে। সম্ভবত এই সম্বন্ধের পিছনে কাজ করেছে দু'গের হাওয়া, কেউ-কেউ যে-কথাটি বলতে প্রস্তুক হয়েছেন। কারণ পেশ্ব্যিন প্রভৃতি কাগজে-বাগাই বই গারা ছাপেন তাঁরা ইতিমধ্যে হঠাৎ বার করেছেন ইংরেজি ছাড়াও বিভিন্ন ইওরোপীয় ভাষার উপজাস, কবিতা, নাটক, প্রবন্ধ, বেরিয়েছে তদান্ধনাৎ নতর 'প্রতিদিনি', লোকনাথ ভট্টাচার্যর রাঁগাবোর অত্ববাদ ও তরাশি কবিতা সম্পর্কিত আলোচনা, শরৎকুমার মুখোপাধ্যায় তরজনা করেছেন রাঁগাবো ও ভেরলেন, বেরিয়েছে বৈদেশিক কবিতার অত্ববাদের একাদিক সংকলন-- অর্থাৎ দরাসি প্রতীকী কবিতা ও তৎপরবর্তী কবিতার সঙ্গে বাংলাদেশের ঘনিষ্ঠতা বেড়েছে। এই অবস্থার মধ্যেই জুনীল গঙ্গোপাধ্যায় বা শক্তি চট্টোপাধ্যায়, বা তাঁদেরই মতো কেউ-কেউ, বোদলেয়ারকে ব্যবহার ক'রে বাংলা কবিতার ঐতিহ্য সম্প্রসারিত করেছেন।

A TENTATIVE CHRONOLOGICAL CHECKLIST OF ARTICLES ON
AND TRANSLATIONS FROM BAUDELAIRE DONE IN BENGAL.

- 1876 DUTTA, TORU. *A Sheaf Gleaned in French Fields*. Shaptahik Sambad Press, Calcutta. Pp. 46 and 164.

Toru Dutta, b. 1856, lived in Europe between 1869 and 1873. Except for a few months in France she never attended any school, though she audited some lectures for women at Cambridge, England. Her father and private tutors were responsible for all the education she ever had. A novel this precocious girl wrote in French, *Le Journal de Mlle. d'Arvers*, was published in Paris in 1879. She knew German and translated from Heine with a note that Heine was more French than German. She also translated from Sanskrit. *A Sheaf Gleaned in French Fields* includes two poems of Baudelaire done into English by this young Bengali poet. The poems are: 'La Cloche fêlée' ('The Broken Bell'), and 'L'Homme et la Mer' ('The Man and the Sea'). These are two of the earliest translations done from Baudel into any language. Toru Dutta in her notes calls Baudelaire 'an eminent poet and critic,' but she does not seem to have had much sympathy toward the poet. She quotes 'Le Guignon' for commenting that Baudelaire 'borrows without acknowledgement.' Her versions:

The Broken Bell

bitter-sweet on winter nights, to note,
 the wailing fire reclined,
 across the fogs, upon the wind,
 low, now near and now remote.
 visions on that music float!

Blessed the bell that through the darkness blind
 Sends honest greetings, consolation kind,
 And solemn warnings from its lusty throat—
 'Tis like a wakeful soldier,—mine, alas!
 The soul bell in me, can but give one cry,
 Like that, a wounded soldier,—o'er whom pass
 Riders and horses, and around whom lie
 The dead and dying in a tangled mass—
 Utters, unable to move or die.

Man and the Sea

Man in thy freedom, thou shalt love always the ocean
 As the mirror in which is reflected thy soul,
 For its infinite depths,—its waves in commotion,
 Of thy spirit the phases, lay bare like a scroll.
 To plunge in its waters, thy bosom rejoices,
 As to clasp a dear mother rejoices a child!
 And thy heart ceases to hear its own inner voices,
 At the sound of that voice unconquered and wild.
 O soul in the shadow thou ever abidest,
 Who has sounded thy depths, and who there may regard?
 And thou sea, who knows of the riches thou hidest,
 Or has seen the dread secrets of thy dark dungeon-ward?
 The same temperaments! And yet through the ages,
 Fierce, pitiless, remorseless, between you is strife!
 Carnage, death, havoc, seem the work and the wages!
 Eternal gladiators!—Brothers grappling for life.

1910 DUTTA, SATYENDRANATH. *Tirthareṇu*. Indian Publishing House, Calcutta.

The book is a collection of lyrical poems from many languages translated into Bengali from their English versions. It includes 2 complete and 2 partial translations from Baudelaire. 'Harmonie du soir' and 'Abel et Cain', fully translated, appear under the title দক্ষার স্বর and উদ্যোত্তর স্বর respectively. দ্বীপবাসী is the Bengali version of 'Le Voyage' (Part VI and VII), and জ্ঞানপাপী of 'L'Irrémédiable', part II. Tagore's appreciation of these translations were printed in the book—"In these translations the poems have taken

new birth the souls have assumed new bodies. This is creative work, not mere craftsmanship." Translator's note: "Baudelaire—(1821-1867) a French poet; he did not consider Beauty as evil, but Evil was beautiful in his eyes. He may be called a poet of the ludicrous." Here are his versions from Baudelaire along with two later versions of 'Harmonie du soir' by Mohitlal Majumdar and Buddhadeva Bose for comparison:

ছন্দা হুজো ('Abel et Cain')

হুজোরাকীর তুলাল ! গুরে ! পেয়ে মেধ নে,
মদ্য বিপি নানান্ নিদি দিচ্ছে এনে !

হুজোরাকীর তুপের বাছা ! ধলাকাপরে
বকে হেটে বেড়াস্ যেন জগ-হাভাতে ।

হুজোরাকীর তুলাল ! তোনার পুছাছ ভারি ঙ্কাক,
জুড়িয়ে গেল হোমের ধুমে নবগ্রহের নাক !

হুজোরাকীর তুপের বাছা ! তোনার তুপ ক্রেণ,—
এ জীবনে হ'বে কি হাঙ্গ, —হ'বে কি তার শেন ?

হুজোরাকীর তুলাল ! তোনার বংশ বাড়িছে,
তোনার গোদন রাজা জুড়ে শূঙ্গ নাড়িছে ।

হুজোরাকীর বাছারে ! তোর স্ফুদ্র, তুপুরে,
পেটের নাড়া চিবার যেন হুগে কুদুরে ।

হুজোরাকীর তুলাল গুরে ধুমাণ্ড গুপেতে,
আরান করে বাপের ঘরে হাদি গুপেতে ।

হুজোরাকীর তুপের বাছা ! তুপের বাছা রে !
বগা নীতে বেড়াস কেঁদে বনের মাঝারে ।

হুজোরাকীর তুলাল ! শেবে ধলায় গড়িলে !
বক দিয়ে তপ নাটি পুঠ করিলে ।

হৃদয়রাগীর তনয় ! ভগ্নো তোমার নাথার ঘান
পড়ুক আরো, বাত কাছে থাক অশ্রিয়ান।

হৃদয়রাগীর ডলান ! তোমার স্নেহকু টুটেছে,
শূন্য-নারা শত্ৰু-কিতে আজ পড়'গ টুটেছে !

হৃদয়রাগীর ডলান ! দর স্বর্ণ যদিবার,
ফিরাক তুমি গ্রহের গতি বিধান বিদ্যাতার।

(Note: 8 lines have been left out. Abel and Cain have been transformed into two characters from Bengali fairytales who do not have much in common with the biblical characters. There is nothing of Baudelaire in this version.)

A: সন্ধ্যার সুর ('Harmonie du soir')

এই গো সন্ধ্যা আসিছে আবার, সন্ধ্যিত-সচেতন
বৃষ্ণে বৃষ্ণে ধূপাধার সন ফুলগুলি কেলো হাস;
ধনিতো গন্ধে ঘূর্ণি লেগেছে, বায়ু করে হাহতাপ,
সান্ন কেনিল মূর্ছা-শিথিল নৃত্য-আবর্তন !

বৃষ্ণে বৃষ্ণে ধূপাধার সন ফুলগুলি কেলো হাস,
শিহরি' গুমরি' বাজিছে বেহালা ঘেন সে ব্যথিত মন;
সান্ন কেনিল মূর্ছা-শিথিল নৃত্য-আবর্তন !
সুন্দর-স্নান, বেদী সুন্দহান সীমাহীন নীলাকাশ।

শিহরি' গুমরি' বাজিছে বেহালা ঘেন সে ব্যথিত মন;
অগাধ আধার নির্ঝাণ-মাঝে নাহি পাই আশ্বাস;
সুন্দর-স্নান, বেদী সুন্দহান সীমাহীন নীলাকাশ,
ঘনীভূত নিজ শোণিতে সূর্য্য হইছে অনর্শন !

অগাধ আধার নির্ঝাণ-মাঝে নাহি পাই আশ্বাস,
ধরার পৃষ্ঠে মুছে গেছে শেষ আলোকের লক্ষণ;
ঘনীভূত নিজ শোণিতে সূর্য্য হইছে অনর্শন,
স্মৃতিটি তোমার জাগিছে স্বপ্নে, পড়িছে অশ্রু-ধাম।

B: সন্ধ্যার সুর

শেখা গন্ধা, কুঞ্জলতিকা ছলিছে মন্দ বায়,
ফুলেরা সবাই গন্ধ বিলায়, যেন সে ধূপের ধূম;
না নাগ ভরিছে বসন-স্বাসে, গীতের মূর্ছনায়—
না নাগ তালে মূর্ছার রেশ, চরণে জড়ায় ঘুম!

ফুলেরা সবাই গন্ধ বিলায়, যেন সে ধূপের ধূম!
বেগলার সুরে শুনিতেছি কোন্ প্রেতের আর্তনাদ!
নাগের তালে মূর্ছার রেশ, চরণে জড়ায় ঘুম!
অন্ত-গগন মৃত্যুসদনে পেতেছে রূপের ফাদ!

বেগলার সুরে শুনিতেছি কোন্ প্রেতের আর্তনাদ!
মৃত্যুর সেই বিশাল পুরীর আধারে সে ভয় পায়!
অন্ত-গগন মৃত্যুসদনে পেতেছে রূপের ফাদ,
রক্তসাগরে ডুবিয়া মরিল সূর্য্য এখনি, হায়!

মৃত্যুর সেই বিশাল পুরীর আধারে সে ভয় পায়—
ফুলেরা দিনের সবটুকু আলো ধীরে নিল ফিরাইয়া;
রক্তসাগরে ডুবিয়া মরিল সূর্য্য এখনি, হায়!
এবে মোর মনে ভাতিছে তোমারি বিকট মূর্তি, প্রিয়া!

মোহিতলাল মজুমদার,
'হেমন্ত-গোধূলি' (১৩৪৮)

[হ্র: 'মোহিতলাল কাব্যসম্ভার', মিত্র ও ঘোষ, (১৩৬৭), পৃ: ৪৪৫-৬।]

C: সন্ধ্যার সুর

এই তো সেই লগ্ন, যবে বৃষ্টি-পরে ফুলে
প্রতিটি ফুল মিলিয়ে যায় যেন ধূপের ধোয়া;
গন্ধ আর শব্দ নিয়ে ঘূর্ণমান হাওয়া;
কখনো হু হু-নাচের তাল ফেনিয়ে ওঠে ফুলে।

প্রতিটি ফুল মিলিয়ে যায় যেন ধূপের ধোয়া;
বেহালা, যেন আতুর প্রাণ, তীব্র তান তোলে;
ককণ ভালু-নাচের তাল কেনিয়ে ওঠে ফুলে;
বেদীর মতো আকাশে নামে বিস্ময়ধন নাচ।

বেহালা, যেন আতুর প্রাণ, তীব্র তান তোলে;
কোমল প্রাণ, ঘৃণা তার শূন্য কালো বাঁধা
বেদীর মতো আকাশে নামে বিস্ময়ধন নাচ,
রক্তঝরা উদ্‌গিরণে স্বর্ষ খায় গলে।

কোমল প্রাণ, ঘৃণা তার শূন্য কালো বাঁধা,
কুড়িয়ে নেয় অতীতে যত আলোর কণা জলে;
রক্তঝরা উদ্‌গিরণে স্বর্ষ খায় গলে...
তোমার স্মৃতি আগার বুকে তর্জনির ছোঁওয়া!

বুদ্ধদেব বহু,

‘শার্গ বোধলোর: তার কবিতা’, নাটানা, (১৯৭৭), পৃ: ৮০।

[Both the translators of A and B are less scrupulous than that of C in finding appropriate equivalent expressions in Bengali. Translation A completely misses the sadness of the original. ‘Valse mélancolique’ has become both in A and B merely নৃত্য, dance. B renders ‘un coeur qu’on afflige’ as প্রেত, demon, (‘a soul in sorrowing plight’—Dorothy Martin; ‘an afflicted heart’—Penguin). In ‘un coeur tendre, qui hait le néant vaste et noir’—‘hait’ has become নাহি পাই আশ্রয়, ‘feel helpless’, in A, ভয় পায়, ‘fears’, in B, and ঘৃণা, ‘hate’, only in C. In B, 3rd line of the 3rd stanza has become অতুগগন মৃত্যু সদনে পেতেছে রূপের ফাঁদ, ‘the sunset sky has spread the web of charm in the house of death’ (‘The sky, sad, lovely tomb, knows not of care’—Dorothy Martin; ‘The sky is sad and beautiful like a vast station of the cross’—Penguin). Even C adds a new verb which can be translated as ‘spreads’/ ‘falls’ whereas the original has only ‘est’.

It would be more interesting to compare the three renderings of the last line of the poem:

A : স্মৃতিটি তোমার জাগ্রিছে হৃদয়ে, পড়িছে আকুল হাস।

* ‘In my heart stirs your memory; troubled sighs escape.’

B : এবে মোর মনে ভাঙিছে তোমারি বিকট মূর্তি, প্রিয়া।

* ‘Your monstrous image shines now, darling, in my heart.’

(‘monstrance’ has been construed as ‘monstrous!’)

১৮৮৮ খ্রিঃ ১১ নং অধিকার বৃদ্ধি উদ্দেশ্যে

Your memory 'gentle press of a forefinger on my heart.'

'Press of a forefinger' is not, of course, a literal translation of 'ostensor' ostensor being 'monstrance', a silver or golden vessel in which the host is exposed, used in the poem in keeping with similar terms like 'encensoir' and 'repasoir.' The translator may be misled by the English word 'remonstrance' which is associated with the French word though the meaning has undergone an interesting change. 'Press of a forefinger' may well stand for a concrete image of 'ostensor'. In any case, it is impossible to find an exact equivalence in Bengali. The Bengali rendering, however, in an indirect way conveys the same implication because 'ostensor' is as much a reminder as is the gentle press of a forefinger. C is, thus, an excellent translation while A and B are indifferent renderings.

—N.G.]

'কা বাই' ('Le voyage' part vi and viii)

ভগ্ন দুরিতা নৈবদ্য মকল ঠাই,
নিখিল হইবে গিরেছে বিহ্বল, পাপের অশ্রু নাই।
খানেক ইন্দ্রিয়, অতি গমিত নারী সে গর্ভপানী,
মলমলানো শ্রাব্য না হয় পুজিতে না আসে হানি।
গান্ধার্য পুস্তক পোটক, কঠোর, অর্থপূর,
শালিখান্দ, নরকের দার, পথে তাহার ঘর
উজ্জ্বল কানে বসি পুস্তক, কন্যার দ্বাড়ে খেল,
গান্ধার্য হইল উৎসব যত পড়ে আসে দেহ।
নিখিল মলিনে পুণ্যনিপুণ করিছে কতটু ভেড়া,
কিছু পুণ্য নিখিল নিখিলে কিছু করে জান্ বেড়া।
গান্ধার্য জান অগাদ আকিমে, নজর থাকে না আর,
নজর থাকে সারাভগ্নের সনাতন সমাচার।

১০ বিদ্য নবীন প্রাচীন নাবিক! নৌকা আসছে তাঁরে।
কিছু জান আছে জীবন, কিছু ভুলে লগ্ন বীরে।
অত্যাচারে প্রাণ দিল আমি, প্রাণ বে নতন চাই,
কিছু জান আছে নবীন নরক, তাহে কিবা আসে খাই?

জান পার্শ্ব ('L'Irrémédiable', part II)

অন্য সে হ'ল মর্ষণ আপনার,
অতল গভীর, তরল পরিষ্কার!
জান পার্শ্ব কোন বন্ধা নাইল, তার,
একটি হারান পার্শ্ব হৈছে তার।

অকারণে মানে কবির প্রতাপ
অশ্রু জলিতা হাতিতে শরতান।
এ এক গর্জ! তুপি এ মগরুপ!
ভেনে শুনে ফোলা করে তোল! কল-রপ!

- 1921 GUPTA, NALINIKANTA. 'Farāsi kavi Baudelaire', an essay in *Sabuj Patra*, Vol. XI (1921) 4 & 5. The essay was later included in *Ādhu-niki* (Modern Book Agency, Calcutta.)

Sabujpatra, the famous monthly magazine which 'started as a revolt and soon became an institution' under the editorship of Pramatha Choudhury, had thus the distinction of publishing the first critical article in Bengali on the French poet. The occasion was the birth centenary of Baudelaire. This was an unusually sympathetic introduction to a poet who had been consistently neglected in this country. Tagore's elder brother Jyotirindranath, a senior contemporary of both Toru Dutta and Satyendranath, was a prolific translator of French literature. Satyendranath's *Tirthareṇu* with a few translations from Baudelaire was dedicated to him. But Jyotirindranath never became interested in this poet. Pramatha Choudhury himself remained immune to Baudelaire though in Vol. I (1914) of his magazine he had published the translation of André Gide's introduction to Tagore's *Gitanjali* in French where Gide mentions Baudelaire's name in connection with Tagore's poetry. As a matter of fact he made a very cutting remark about Baudelaire in his Presidential address at the first anniversary meeting of Indo-Latin Society in 1928. (See *Vichitrā*, Vol. II, 6. Pp. 749-759). Nalinikanta Gupta who wrote this first Bengali article on Baudelaire was already a staunch nationalist turned mystic. An old man now, he lives in the Pandichery Ashrama of Sri Aurobindo.

described Baudelaire as a mystic poet who followed
out of mysticism

MINI Letters, Vol. III, (On Poetry and Literature).
Minto Circle Bombay, 1949. Pp. 327-8.

Only a short letter dated 27. 2. 37. The recipient of the
not mentioned

does not exactly refute the current charge against
that he delights in filth and vulgarity but simply states
was 'too great an artist' to be dismissed like that.

MOHITAI. *Hemanta Godhuli*. See *Mohitai Kāvya-*
(Collected Poems), Mitra and Ghosh, Calcutta, 1960.

Godhuli is a book of poems that includes some transla-
from various sources done from their English versions.
The Preface to this book is dated July, 1941. Only one
Baudelaire ('Harmonie du soir') was translated. The
has already been quoted above.

NALINIKANTA. *Poets and Mystics*. Sri Aurobindo
Madras. 1951.

files in this collection of essays consider the works of Bau-
In 'Mystic Poetry' the author brings in Baudelaire as an
of a mystic poet who 'by the sheer intensity of sympathy
penetrates as it were into the soul of things and makes
the unclean, the sordid throb and glow in an almost celes-
' (p. 21) In 'Poetry in the Making' he considers Baudelaire
the first of the real moderns in many ways' because Baudelaire
first saw and experienced (the) intimate polarity of opposites
nature and consciousness.'

NIHARIDAXA In Vol. XVII, 1, of the avant garde poetry
magazine *Adyana*, first drafts of three translations from Baudelaire
published to be followed three years later in Vol. XX
of other poems. Vols. XXI and XXII of this magazine

printed further 18 and 36 poems respectively making it amply that for the first time a serious Bengali poet had undertaken to translate with scrupulous craftsmanship the major part of the work of a great poet of the occident. This was love's labour in the best sense of the term. After the translation came a long essay on Baudelaire and modern poetry in Vol. XXIII, 3 and 4, which soon formed the introduction to the author's book *Charles Baudelaire: Tnār Kavita* (Translations), 1961, wherein were included 112 poems from *Fleurs du mal* in Bengali. Manabendra Bannerjee has written on the impact of this book on the younger generation of poets in Bengal. (See pp. 32-51 of this number of *JJCL*).

Current editions of *Fleurs du mal* contain 159 (sometimes 162 or even 190) poems in all. Number of poems translated from each section of this book: from 'Spleen et idéal'—61 (81); 'Tableaux Parisiens'—14 (17); 'Le vin'—4 (5); 'Fleurs du mal'—8 (12); 'Révolte'—1 (3); 'La mort'—6 (6); and from 'Poèmes ajoutés' or, as it is sometimes called, 'Supplément aux Fleurs du mal'—13 (25/29 or more). [Figures in parenthesis indicate the number of poems in the original.]

From translator's note: "Since I have left out a few poems here and there, the specialists may object to the probable outrage done to the architectural design intended by the poet. But my book is meant for quite common readers like myself who read poetry for pleasure. To them I submit that if I have not translated *all* the poems from *Fleurs du mal* it is not for any lack of enthusiasm but for the fear that the size of this book would exceed the permissible limit, though I have tried to present the character of the Baudelairean world through more or less one hundred poems. ... I have never formally studied French, but with the help of dictionaries and several English versions of the poems (particularly in the edition from New Directions and in Roy Campbell) I have tried to explore each original poem, have taken note of deviations in the English versions, and, in translating them myself, have always kept Baudelaire's own words in mind. I believe these translations would not have been any different had I been as much familiar with French as with English. ... Baudelaire's stanzas and rhyme schemes I have scrupulously kept intact in translation, and have never allowed myself any liberties in the use of any images, though occasionally attempts had to be given up as impossible of literally imitating the

... I believe these
from what Baudelaire thought or
in their formal structure they
the original poems. Moreover,
in making them readable as poems

to the poems which are not always
an important date-chart beginning
of the *Sorrows of Young Werther*, 1774,
death of Ibsen, 1906. There is also an excellent
of Baudelaire's life with detailed comments on
of the age

Translation of 'Enivrez-vous' (酩酊同 狂) was
in *Asiatic* Vol. XX, 1.

YAN *Explorations*. Renaissance Publishers, Calcutta.

devoted to Baudelaire, from the viewpoint of
Explains him as inheriting the misanthropy
of Montaigne and Pascal, a consequence of post-
loss of moral certainty, which led him to pursue
relative absolutes of art (Montaigne) and religion
with less assurance, so that he could attain
tolerant indifference and insouciance of Montaigne,
theological firmness of Pascal.' Sees him as a
influence but a great artist, true to the world as he
it which is our world, the modern world of
and decay from which we must be rescued by a
In English.

AMANGALBODH 'Amangalbodh O Rabindranath' in *The*
College Magazine (Golden Jubilee Number), 1965,
in the Bengali section. This article later formed a part of
in a book in Bengali *Rabindranath O Ādhunikatā*,
(Bodh and modernism) Bharavi, Calcutta, 1968.

As well as the book does not mention the name of Baudelaire
the title but the poetic ideal of the French poet is the most

important item of the discussion right from the beginning. Excerpts from the essay: "The vast reputation of this poet rests on firmer ground than merely on the formal excellence and faultless choice of words in his poetry. Mankind is senselessly selfseeking and ruthless in cupidity, foolish in national racial or religious hatred, is slave to all kinds of sickness and malady because it has not as yet acquired the knowledge of even the rudiments of psychology and physiology—so long as these factors persist we all shall from time to time suffer from the sordidness of life. Darkness of an utter despondency and melancholy occupies people with subtle and sensitive mind when they contemplate this helpless situation of human life. This darkness has assumed a shape in Baudelaire, and his poetry is the incomparable, supreme expression of this mood. All this is conceded. And even then I must contend that Baudelaire is the sovereign and impeccable poet of only one particular mood, one particular taste--nothing more than that.... It needs a flight of fancy to discover any affirmative meaning or suggestion in Baudelaire's poetry: the whole of his creative work is so much packed with negative conception that it is futile to seek there anything else....No quest for any transcendence, but repugnance to everything that belongs to life is the fundamental and pervading mood of Baudelaire's poetry."—*Tr. N. G.*

SWAPAN MAJUMDAR, another graduate student of the Department, was associated with the compilation of this bibliography. The compilers are aware that this is only a tentative list—Ed.

YEATS'S MEDITATION ON 'THE BESTIAL FLOOR'

Yeats's return to the sexual theme in his old age is of such an aggressive quality that it might excite, in certain minds, a kind of holy horror. To those who have delighted in the long tradition of love poetry in the language including Yeats's own earlier attempts, it must indeed appear grotesque. Momentarily we conjure up a ludicrous figure—an impossible old codger lamenting the drying up of vitality, unable to make his peace with the most elementary demand of the human condition. It is the image of a man who could become the proper quarry of the Comic Muse, being something of a male counterpart of Lady Wishfort. A critic with an excessive addiction to biographical criticism might, perhaps, put it all down to the glandular operation Yeats underwent in May 1914. That operation did bring to Yeats a kind of resurgent energy and its effects were not obviously confined to poetry. Yeats's brief flirtation with the Fascism of General O'Duffy could with equal justice be put down to the same cause. For, as someone has said, whoever wants to make a fool of himself will always find a chance in politics! In any case, that is a pitifully inadequate salve to our revolted feelings and, on second thoughts, the glandular explanation would actually seem to make the image of the old man slightly more horrid, if anything.

That Yeats himself was aware of this reaction is clear from his constantly reiterated prayer for old age which is implicit in poem after poem even when not explicitly voiced:

O what am I that I should not seem
For the song's sake a fool?

(C.P., p. 326)

He asks the freedom of an old man's frenzy for the song's sake because

the song has to be made in the marrow-bone. For its sake he would risk ridicule:

You think it horrible that lust and rage
Should dance attention upon my old age;
They were not such a plague when I was young;
What else have I to spur me into song?
(*C.P.*, p. 359)

The truth is, of course, that an inner necessity, a fierce consuming urge, drove him to plumb steeply down to the bottom of an experience which he had before largely taken for granted or lightly romanticised. One may sense the anger at himself for his past blindness and, occasionally, even a touch of swagger in the way he goes about stripping himself, even right below the skin, to the bare bones. 'I must lay aside the pleasant patter I have built up for years and seek the brutality, the ill-breeding, the barbarism of truth.' That is a part of his resolution to 'wither into the truth.' In effect, the bestial openness of the sexual imagery ceases to be erotic strictly speaking; nor is it possible to regard it merely as the out-pouring of an imagination muddled by remembered lust. There is firstly the inevitable distancing of age, giving the lust and rage the character of a clean recreation. And then, what is more important, the sexual imagery tends to be stylised and symbolical. The images function within a frame larger than themselves. In fact, the animating principle always remains metaphysical. 'Because I am mad about women, I am mad about the hills.' This metaphysical interest steadily grows in intensity from poem to poem as age advances. Lust and rage are no unseasonable lasciviousness but rather pure passion, spontaneous and complete. Copulation is never merely 'the expense of spirit in a waste of shame' but rather, and at the same time, an exercise in the search for that Unity of Being of which physical union is the symbol. We go down in order to go up.

Those numerous passages, both poetry and prose, in which he announces his intention to descend to the physical and the foul, reveal the deeper hidden urge that is active below the surface:

Those masterful images because complete
Grew in pure mind, but out of what began?
A mound of refuse or the sweepings of a street,
Old kettles, old bottles, and a broken can,
Old iron, old bones, old rags, that raving slut
Who keeps the till. Now that my ladder's gone,

lie down where all the ladders start,
that rag-and-bone shop of the heart.

(C.P., p. 392)

For one life is not enough he is prepared to re-enter the
world again after death and release, even though it is like a
burial

Does it matter if the ditches are impure?...
I am content to live it all again
Yet again, if it be life to pitch
In the top-spawn of a blind man's ditch,
Blind man battering blind men;

(C.P., p. 266)

Central to all that deliberate abasement is the firm conviction
that this is the obvious nexus of spiritual as well as physical seed.
The insistence is that the reality of the spirit is to be sought in
that spirit must incarnate in sex. The conflagration of the
being involved in the sexual act resolves the antinomies, opens
on the beatific vision. The mood of spiritual excitement and
future are somehow inseparable—the one contains the other.
If love is chosen in a very special sense. The woman in the
hymn says:

If questioned on
utmost pleasure with a man
Some new-married bride, I take
My stillness for a theme
His heart my heart did seem
Both adrift on the miraculous stream
I wrote a learned astrologer—
I /odine is changed into a sphere.

(C.P., p. 311)

This is an example of Yeats's trafficking with geometric symbols
which becomes irksome. In that system the historical processes
outlined by the gyres—the reference to the learned astrologer who
than Macrobius would indicate the kind of source he got
What shape would express that which transcends the
timeless and yet in a way contains it? The sphere has no begin-
ning and is rounded, perfect and self-contained. It can be con-
sidered containing all space and all time. At the moment of the

stillness of sexual union, therefore, the Zodiac changes into the sphere.

One may notice the obvious resemblance to Donne or Hopkins or Lawrence in such symbolism of the moment of sexual ecstasy. Yeats's 'Zodiac changed into a sphere' might seem to echo Donne's use of the same image in several of his poems, as in 'The Sunne Rising'—'This bed thy center is, these walls, thy sphere.' or in 'Good Morrow' or in 'A Valediction: Of Weeping' and so on. The resemblance is somewhat superficial; Yeats's sphere is linked with the gyres and with a system of geometric symbols, which, one should imagine, is the result of his preoccupation with occult practices. Yeats's poetry might seem to suffer because of the burden of this complicated geometry it is made to carry. In the poem 'Chosen' itself we sense a palpable decline—the very abruptness with which the Zodiac and the sphere enter the poem, breaking in harshly on the familiar tone of intimacy of the woman's words strikes one as brashly mechanical. And then, as Ellmann and others have said, there is always a certain ambiguity in Yeats's symbols:

'The sphere which contains the gyres is reality. As might be expected Yeats had little to tell of beatitude, the immediate apprehension of reality beyond that aspect of it which is symbolised in sexual ecstasy, and his use of sexual imagery is entirely unlike that of a religious poet like Hopkins:

Jesu, heart's light,
Jesu, maid's son,
What was the feast followed the night
Thou hadst glory of this nun?

With Yeats the reader suspects that the poet may prefer the symbol of beatitude to beatitude itself. ... The penetrating gyres are symbolic of sexual love, but it would be equally true to say that sexual love is symbolic of the gyres. Symbols reflect one another like mirrors so that a great range of connotation is called into play, and there is no way of separating the two parts of the metaphor—the dancer from the dance.'

This is an important distinction. In religious poetry properly so called there could be no such ambiguity: the line of preference should be clear; whereas Yeats will surprise us again and again by actually preferring 'the profane perfection of mankind' to the beatitude imaged in it. Sexual consummation itself remains for him a great reality and the sense that it is so should linger throughout the poetic process of symbolisation. That's what distinguishes Yeats's handling of the sexual theme from that of Donne or Hopkins which is more properly religious. At the same time, it also differs from the purely physical élan of a Lawrence. We

Perhaps take seriously Yeats's own claim: 'But then, there are symbolisms and none exactly resembles mine.' His has a metaphysics all its own. The poem 'Chosen' seems to mark a new role on the sexual act as a symbol of that achieved unity. But impulse has grown in him as he grew older. While the metaphysical notion is always present, as it is, for instance, in Blake's use of the theme, Yeats's special need was to imaginatively re-enter the physicality of that consummation so that the physical and the metaphysical could be held in a taut balance.

This is something of the very nature and essence of his poetic strategy.

A full affirmation of the sensual element is essential to it. To the total merging of man and woman in all its sensuous detail, to the physical intensity of passion, was his Muse's imperious need.

The note of regret at the onset of age we hear again and again is filled with the lurking fear that his body would after all let down his spirit despite his oft-repeated willingness to make a fool of himself for love's sake. The regret is deep and pervasive:

O who would have foretold
That the heart grows old?

(C.P., p. 156)

It is the same twinge of regret at the sight of the wild swans at Coole:

Unwearied still, lover by lover,
They paddle in the cold
Companionable streams or climb the air;
Their hearts have not grown old;

(C.P., p. 147)

The poems of that volume *Wild Swans at Coole* are full of an ageing man's regret at imaging a passion no longer felt. But the regret is at least equally keenly felt as for a possible decline in his poetic ability on account of age. Because by that time the conviction had grown that the physicality of the sexual passion was the true matrix of the spirit and so the central theme of his poetry. The drying up of the wells of passion was at the same time that 'Othello's occupation' had gone:

I bade, because the wick and oil are spent
And frozen are the channels of the blood.
My discontented heart to draw content
From beauty that is cast out of a mould

In bronze, or that in dazzling marble appears,
 Appears, but when we have gone is gone again.
 Being more indifferent to our solitude
 Than 'twere an apparition. Oh heart, we are old;
 The living beauty is for younger men:
 We cannot pay its tribute of wild tears.

(C.P., p. 156)

As Melchiori in his two books *The Whole Mystery of Art* and *The Tight-rope Walkers* has tried to show, Yeats built for himself a kind of mystique around this Moment of Moments, that of sexual union. It is the moment of fulfilment when we escape the limit of time and the natural process in which we are encased. It is Eliot's 'intersection of the temporal and the timeless.' 'In the intuition of that supreme moment all experience is unified and rolled into one—the artist, the mystic, and the sensualist share the same feeling of fullness of life and achievement, beyond the temporal and space boundaries, reaching the condition that Yeats called Unity of Being.' We enter upon a state where all fuel has become flame, where there is nothing but the state itself, nothing to constrain it or end it. What is peculiar to Yeats perhaps is his emphasis that this sense of transcendence is the same as that which is achieved in the act of creation or enjoyment of a work of art. It is true that Yeats found his cue for all this in the pagan phallicism of the West in general but a more emphatic source was in the East. That is why the hero of his unpublished novel *The Speckled Bird* was to be sent to the East where he would find the doctrine of a higher reconciliation practised in the life of the common people, one in which all arts spring from sexual love and are identified with religion.

In a sense, there is nothing in all this that is strictly new. Yeats was only repeating a conception common to poets and mystics of all times, what, for instance, was to Blake 'the pulsation of the artery' in which the poet's work is done and out of which all great events of Time issue forth. And I believe Melchiori is right in thinking that there is something in the character of the modern psyche that has given a central position to this conception of 'the moment' in modern literature. It is 'the moment of being' of Virginia Woolf, the 'epiphanies' of Joyce; in both, the concept acquires an eminently aesthetic connotation. For Eliot, it is the moment of incarnation at 'the still point of the turning world.' And if in Eliot the connotation is religious, in Lawrence it is almost purely physical. But nowhere, I think, has the Moment of

He received such poetic amplitude as in Yeats. If one looks for a truly poet of the modern age in whom 'the Moment' so completely contains the stuff of poetry I should think of Rilke. In none else does the myth-making faculty work so continuously and at such a pace as it does in Yeats. In Rilke, the transformation brought about is so integral that the distinction between the physical and the spiritual is wholly dissolved. Rilke's poetry, as some critic has said, is not 'anthropomorphic' but 'cosmomorphic', a description which I apply to Yeats as well. In Yeats, it is true, the historical sense is almost completely lost; and that is a major difference in their vision of poetic craft. In Rilke the moment of love is independent of time and has more in common with death than with all the movements of our lives. Thus Yeats's 'Moment of Moments' would seem to correspond to what Rilke called those moments 'that stand vertically upon the courses of life'. One has only to open the *Duino Elegies* at random to see how his poetry is suffused with the kind of significance Yeats gives it. When he apostrophises the lovers:

I know why you so blissfully touch: ... because the caress withholds ... because you perceive thereunder pure duration until your embraces almost promise eternity.

(*'Second Elegy'*, ll. 55-60)

When he dwells on the male inadequacy in love, while the woman he loves like Gaspara Stampa may near perfection:

One thing to sing the beloved, another, alas!, that hidden guilty river-god of the blood... would uplift his godhead, uprousing the night to infinite uproar. Oh, the Neptune within our blood, oh, his terrible trident! Oh, the gloomy blast from his twisted shell! Hark, how the night grows fluted and hollowed. You stare, is it not from you that the lover's delight from the loved one's face arises?

(*'Third Elegy'*, ll. 1-12)

When the maid is apostrophised:

Look, we don't love like flowers, with only a single season behind us, immemorial sap mounts in our arms when we love. Oh, maid, *thou* that we've loved, *within* us, not one, still to come, but all the innumerable fermentation: not just a single child,

but the fathers, resting like mountain-ruins
 within our depths;—but the dry river-bed
 of former mothers:—yes, and the whole of that
 soundless landscape under its cloudy or
 cloudless destiny:—*this* got the start of you, maid.
 ('Third Elegy', ll. 66-75)

And yet, despite this great similarity the difference I alluded to remains and is important. Yeats's apprehension of the physical fact of sex as a historical reality is never blurred. A certain kind of dialectic process seems to be at the heart of the matter. Spirit must incarnate in sex but the earthiness of love and its spiritual counterpart, both, must retain their identities; one is not to be wholly superseded by the other. Sexual love becomes the symbol of reconciliation of opposites, the resolution of conflicting elements into a superior unity; it is the tension between the two poles that generates the poetry. Melchiori holds the view that from the date of the poem 'Chosen' (1926) which has the line, 'The Zodiac is changed into a sphere', Yeats came to a new conception of the sexual moment as a *final* escape from the wheel of time, whereas, earlier, as in the Leda sonnet it was only a momentary suspension, miraculous and of cosmic import but still a new beginning, not the final peace and stillness. On the other hand it seems to me that the evidence of his imagery throughout is against such a conclusion. To the very last, as in the poem which serves as a sort of last Will and Testament, 'Under Ben Bulbin', he continues to prefer the profane perfection of mankind and counsels men of art to 'bring the soul of man to God' by making him fill the cradles right. Both image and theme point to recurrence and a return rather than an escape. And then, to call it 'the final escape into a peace and stillness' is a very questionable way of putting Yeats's meaning. One is reminded of Martin's description of Heaven at the end of the play *The Unicorn and the Stars*. Martin discovers the mistake of thinking Heaven to be a place of quiet and music where all strife is at an end. 'I have been there,' he says, and continues, 'The lover still loves, but with a greater passion, and the rider still rides, but the horse goes like the wind and leaps the ridges, and the battle goes on always, always. That is the joy of Heaven, continual battle.' And that is a truer description of the dynamic unity and wholeness present to Yeats's mind, than is indicated by the phrase 'the final escape into a peace and stillness.'

His treatment of the sexual theme has a wide range. When the

to politics, for instance, we may have the pleasantly casual
 "Can I, that girl standing there,
 Attention fix
 Roman or on Russian
 on Spanish politics?"

(*C.P.*, p. 392)

as the grave manner of 'Easter 1916'.

All changed, changed utterly:
 A terrible beauty is born.

(*C.P.*, p. 202)

too, has a deep-hidden connection with the sexual theme, the
 stamp assuming the character of a violent new birth.
 It always, Yeats's presentation of the theme takes the form of
 things unresolved or to be resolved only through the alchemy of
 Moment of Moments. It is as if:

Between extremities
 Man runs his course;
 A brand, or flaming breath,
 Comes to destroy
 All these antinomies
 (In day and night....

(*C.P.*, p. 282)

It is a sort of crucible in which warring elements are to be tested
 purified. The metaphysical suggestion arises from the tensions
 hinted in that experience, redeeming it from romanticising or worse
 It will be interesting to explore some of these antinomies,
 cursorily.

the opposition may be established on the purely social plane, merely
 the woman's need to break through the cobweb entanglements
 and propriety that keep her from her destiny and her triumph:

I did the dragon's will until you came
 Because I had fancied love a casual

Improvisation, or a settled game
That followed if I let that kerchief fall:

(*C.P.*, p. 310)

Then the young man comes like a Saint George or Pagan Pegasus, kills the dragon, breaks her chains, and then they stare astonished at the sea, and a miraculous bird shrieks at her. (The miraculous bird has kinship with the miraculous stream on which the lovers of the poem 'Chosen' were adrift.) Woman has to recognise the true status of the angry river-god in her blood, respect the craving in her bones, and be ready to defy the reproving song that announces the murderous stealth of day:

Let him sing on,
I offer to love's play
My dark declivities.

(*C.P.*, p. 312)

This tussling with the traditional dragon has its own submerged metaphysical reference. Woman should retain her power to give herself unhampered by the dragon of civilisation for 'civilisation is hooped together, brought under a rule, under the semblance of peace, by manifold illusion.' She has to make contact with the substratum, the vital turbulence, raving, raging, uprooting so that she may come into the desolation of reality. So far, all may seem decorous and seemly; but the full force of that antithetical relation can be brought out only through the rank bawdry of a Crazy Jane. Crazy Jane is born of that need. She is in some ways the counterpart of 'the wild old wicked man' that Yeats himself has become. Crazy Jane was modelled we are told, on a certain crazy Mary, 'the local satirist and a really terrible one.' But in Yeats she has become a purely poetic creation. Yeats gives the character a fine dramatic amplitude by presenting her in characteristic moods—her inveterate feud with the bishop, her inevitable lapse into self-reproof or her smarting under the lash of reproof administered by others, her effort to grasp the fleeting insights springing from the flesh and the desolate melancholy that seems to be chronic to her. And the whole thing is informed with a sense of irony and wit which occasionally colours Yeats's poetry. Many deeper antinomies are involved in Crazy Jane's utterances and postures, for instance, the one implicit in her exulting, challenging assertion that there is a spiritual aspect to physical delight. But the most obvious of these oppositions is that between the brazenness and effrontery of Crazy Jane and the effete, high-bred fictions with which

She tends to deface the fact of sex. She, in herself, creates the pole to that of the dessicate Bishop whom she is bent upon holding in searing words.

The rather terrible opposition is carried on through the very and vocabulary of bawdry Yeats uses in these and the later belly, bum, swish, punk, bowels, leching, the man-picker Niam, bladdered Emer and so forth—to lend a sharper edge to it. Of course, even so, it never dwindles to mere satire; and the sense of traditional sanctity and loveliness invoked in Yeats's prayer for light is not jeopardized by Jane's turbulence.

And, the earthly mystery of sex may be held in an antithetical relation to the religious experience. This is signalled by the early poem 'The Magi' in which 'the pale unsatisfied ones' appear and disappear in the blue depth of the sky,

hoping to find once more,
by Calvary's turbulence unsatisfied.
The uncontrollable mystery on the bestial floor.
(C.P., p. 141)

These lines seem to violently disrupt the religious force of the Christian and introduce an ambiguity. Blackmur has said, "There is an ambiguity in the poem called 'The Magi' which we can feel the weight of but cannot altogether name, and of which we can only guess at the effect." Were Yeats a Christian we could accept it as a species of blasphemy but since his Christianity is of a dubious sort, Blackmur finds it difficult to accept the ambiguity as poetic because while one of the terms is from Christian feeling, the other is hitched on, perhaps, to magic or occult. "Yeats's experience is not represented consistently on one plane," says Blackmur. For him, there is something of the difficulty in the poem 'The Second Coming.' As a matter of fact, the rational efficacy of such a collocation of opposites does not depend on Christian feeling as such, nor on magic as Blackmur seems to suspect. Yeats's perception of a common basis on which all religions rest in which all forms of mystic experience, too, can claim a part. The ambiguity of the collocation, the religious connotation of Magi and the sexual connotation of 'the uncontrollable mystery on

the bestial floor,' re-inforce each other thus pointing to a higher unity rather than cancel each other out.

A similar effect is produced in the poem 'The Mother of God' which Yeats obviously composed with a Byzantine picture he had seen in mind. The bewildered Mother of God who had found content in those ordinary things other women delight in is heard questioning sceptically, profanely:

What is this flesh I purchased with my pains,
This fallen star my milk sustains?

(*C.P.*, p. 282)

The description of the annunciation itself is cast in terms which brings the sexual image to mind:

The threefold terror of love: a fallen flare
Through the hollow of the ear;
Wings beating about the room;
The terror of all terrors that I bore
The Heavens in my womb.

(*C.P.*, p. 281)

Incidentally, we may notice that the words and even the syntax echo those of the Leda sonnet.—'A sudden blow: the great wings beating still,' 'the terrified vague fingers.' The terror, the beating wings, the fructified womb are common to both. And then, this too is a mating of a God and a woman as the other. The counterpointing of physical sex with religion reaches a climax perhaps in the lyrics of Ribh, the Irish hermit. At the tomb of Baile and Aillin, Ribh reads his holy book by the light made by the physical contact of the lovers who have become angels. For:

When such bodies join
There is no touching here, nor touching there,
Nor straining joy, but whole is joined to whole....

(*C.P.*, p. 328)

And he insists that as man, as beast, as an ephemeral fly begets, God-head begets Godhead in sexual spasm. As Ellmann has put it: 'The tenor of Yeats's work is that religion must embrace sexuality or be an empty dogmatism, life-destroying instead of life-furthering.' And his dissatisfaction with Christianity is that it has 'substituted a virgin womb and an empty tomb for the more inclusive phallicism of earlier religions'.

The same way is intellect, with all its achievements, held in a tense
 with physical sex, is measured against it for a moment and
 except it be caught up and absorbed in the synthesis
 of Moments. All Solomon's wisdom and learning, we
 find in the Solomon and Sheba poems, is superseded in worth
 by their mutual passion. In the same way Michael Robartes
 does:

To pluck Athene by the hair:
 For what mere book can grant a knowledge
 With an impassioned gravity
 Appropriate to that beating breast,
 That vigorous thigh, that dreaming eye?
 And may the Devil take the rest.

(C.P., p. 197)

Of course, the major confronting of the life of intellect, in the pre-
 sent sense, with the physical act of copulation takes place in the
 famous Leda sonnet where 'God and woman mate, and eternity is
 born on time':

A sudden blow: the great wings beating still
 Above the staggering girl, her thighs caressed
 By the dark webs, her nape caught in his bill,
 He holds her helpless breast upon his breast.
 How can those terrified vague fingers push
 The feathered glory from her loosening thighs?
 And how can body, laid in that white rush,
 But feel the strange heart beating where it lies?

(C.P., p. 241)

There is another annunciation, the birth of history, of Homeric
 which laid the foundations of the civilised order of the west. But
 itself is also the great theme. The hard clarity and sheer
 of the gross physical image make their impact before the conscious-
 of history be allowed to enter the poem. 'It is for passion's sake,
 history.' And the shudder in the loins engenders there the broken
 the burning roof and tower and Agamemnon dead - and that civi-
 lisation's two thousand year career, all present in the germ in that moment;
 spirit and animality have entered the human. But in the experience
 of that moment itself there is no such awareness of history. In that respect

what it describes is the same as the common human fare of the other poem 'Whence Had They Come?' :

Eternity is passion, girl or boy
Cry at the onset of their sexual joy
'For ever and for ever'; then awake
Ignorant what *Dramatis Personae* spake.
(*C.P.*, p. 332)

So is Leda ignorant of what 'sacred drama through her body heaved'.
Hence the wondering question at the end:

Did she put on his knowledge with his power
Before the indifferent beak could let her drop?
(*C.P.*, p. 241)

So is all the splendour of Hellenic intellect subjected to the test of the great crucible. In the two poems on the Delphic Oracle, Plato, Plotinus and Pythagorus—golden-thighed Pythagorus, Pythagorus who gave numbers, measurement, calculation, who conceived 'the music of the spheres' and 'the transmigration of souls'—Pythagorus as well as the other great heroes of legend, all the golden codgers must lie sighing in the dolphin-torn ecstatic waters where

Foul goat-head, brutal arm appear,
Belly, shoulder, bum.
Flash fishlike; nymphs and satyrs
Copulate in the foam.
(*C.P.*, p. 377)

What is important is that the heroes gladly merge with gross desire and with the satyr's orgy, finding the soul's truth undistinguishable from the body's act. Nor are the massed brute images devoid of sensitive beauty. It is 'slim adolescence that a nymph has stripped' and her limbs are 'delicate as an eye-lid.' There is no recoil from the defilement, no shame or remorse. That, indeed, should be news for the Delphic Oracle!

IV

The final antinomy to be resolved is in the region of the aesthetic synthesis. And it springs from the peculiar 'doubleness' of the sexual

well. In that experience beauty is apprehended ideally
 but by the violence and ugliness of the brute act itself. This
 'double-ness' is something always present in the common
 men and women. Filth must besmirch the glory, shame must
 be married to revulsion. That is what makes love and
 rank and gives rise to rank vulgarity on one side and ficti-
 on the other; that is, when the true synthesis is not grasped.
 when the animal ardour of the satyr merges with the purest
 nobility. 'Then is 'love a most perfect whole.' That is how
 Crazy Jane becomes the final test of Yeats's faith;
 the open bawdry of the 'Three Bushes' and the companion poems.
 In these poems challenge our ideality and test its strength. And
 Jane does the honour of making the emblematic pronouncement:

'All and foul are near of kin,
 and fair needs foul: I cried,
 My friends are gone, but that's a truth
 I prove nor bed denied,
 turned in bodily lowliness
 and in the heart's pride.'

And woman can be proud and stiff
 When on love intent;
 but love has pitched his mansion in
 the place of excrement;
 'In nothing can be sole or whole
 that has not been rent.'

(C.P., p. 294)

But, Yeats believed, should be capable of being couched in simple
 Nothing could be simpler than Jane's lowly vocabulary but
 condensed wealth has gone into her words! A glance at the early
 of the poem would reveal with what rigour Yeats hunted up the
 words. That 'woman proud and stiff' stands for all those whose
 and ideality recoils from the brute defilement. And what
 'rent' would have conveyed the precise nuance of the 'double-
 how whole retaining at the same time a subtle touch of violence
 inseparable from that perfect wholeness?
 But ideality and the shock of defilement and desecration, these
 elementary in sex-love. 'As blasphemy is impossible without
 orthodoxy, so defilement is impossible without a powerful
 Other have used the technique of defilement to characterise
 experience. Milton uses it to make sin loathsome; Swift uses

the excremental to arouse sexual revulsion. As distinct from these, Yeats uses the opposition as a positive value; the desecration involved in bodily love is a 'fecund desecration.' It is a part of the body's mystery, the mystery of the bestial floor. You have to create the dream of purity and of loveliness by exercising your sensibility before you can desecrate it. If the dream is built in haughty isolation from the foul rag-and-bone shop of the heart it has to suffer an answering violent desecration as seems to be represented in Yeats's dance-drama *A Full Moon in March*.

Men at all times seek the way to relate the two fruitfully, and art helps in the process. In Yeats's view of art— which is highly influenced by oriental concepts and practice—art helps us to marry our passion with our sense of beauty. Great art for Yeats is sheer impersonal passion, the physical intensified into the supernatural. It presents to men emblems and models of absolute passion which help them to channelise their own. In his 'Death of Synge' Yeats speaks of the greatness of old art and its superiority to the new:

The old art, if carried to its logical conclusion, would have led to the creation of one single type of man, one single type of woman; gathering up by a kind of deification a capacity for all energy and all passion, into a Krishna, a Christ, a Dionysus. . . . And at all times, a poetical painter like Botticelli creates as his supreme achievement one type of face afterwards known by his name. . . . The new art can create innumerable personalities, but in each of these the capacity for passion has been sacrificed to some habit of body or mind. . . . Man is studied as the individual fact, and not as that energy which seems measureless and hates all that is not itself. It is a powerful but prosaic art, celebrating the 'fall into division,' not 'the resurrection into unity.' . . . It is this lack of capacity for passion which makes women dislike the schools of characterisation, and makes the modern artist despise woman's judgment.

It is that art of the old masters that helps to intensify our perception of impassioned beauty, the true type of which, for Yeats, is Michael Angelo:

That girls at puberty may find
The first Adam in their thought,
Shut the door of the Pope's chapel,
Keep those children out.
There on that scaffolding reclines
Michael Angelo.

(C.P., p. 382)

Spain:

Measurement began our might:
 Forms a stark Egyptian thought,
 Forms that gentler Phidias wrought.
 Michael Angelo left a proof
 On the Sistine Chapel roof.
 Where but half-awakened Adam
 Can disturb glove-trotting Madam
 Till her bowels are in heat.
 Proof that there's a purpose set
 Before the secret working mind:
 Profane perfection of mankind.

(C.P., p. 299)

Did the statues created by Phidias and his craftsmen help the Greeks
 channelise and direct their sexual instincts:

Pythagoras planned it. Why did the people stare?
 His numbers, though they moved or seemed to move
 In marble or in bronze, lacked character.
 But boys and girls, pale from the imagined love
 Of solitary beds, knew what they were,
 That passion could bring character enough,
 And pressed at midnight in some public place
 Live lips upon a plummet-measured face.

(C.P., p. 375)

It is to say, as Ellmann puts it, 'Greek boys and girls fell in love by
 finding in each other's eyes the beauty of some statue of Phidias, which
 itself not an emotional outpouring but the result of passion bounded
 the most careful calculation.' Thus Phidias gave women dreams and
 gave them their looking-glass. Even that 'artifice of eternity,' the golden
 statue set upon the golden bough of the Byzantium poem is like the Greek
 sculpture in that it could only sing to lords and ladies of Byzantium of
 things past, passing and to come,' in other words, make the self-same
 sensual music of lovers in one another's arms, birds in trees—previously
 dreamed, but with this difference that it has now grown richer
 and more real.

The theme of beauty and desecration in sex gains amplitude steadily
 from the advance to the last poems and plays, and brings within its ambit
 the legendary and the mythical. Crazy Jane on the Mountain sees the
 legendary heroic figures of Cuchulain and Emer in a new light. In her

brief vision 'Those ceremonious symbols of the passionate life have their heroic eroticism touched with the excremental.'

There in a two-horsed carriage
That on two wheels ran
Great-bladdered Emer sat,
Her violent man
Cuchulain sat at her side....

(C.P., p. 390)

With that one physiological detail, 'great-bladdered,' the romantic image of heroic love is effectively shattered but not for long. The defilement is not destructive; despite the unmistakable sexual implications of the term 'great-bladdered' applied to the lady and the description of the hero as 'her violent man', Cuchulain and Emer do not lose their heroic dignity and still remain great. A sense of their greatness is wafted back to us in poor Jane's grieving for the vanished heroic life:

Thereupon,
Propped upon my two knees,
I kissed a stone:
I lay stretched out in the dirt
And I cried tears down.

(C.P., p. 390)

But the climax is perhaps reached in the last plays and notably in *A Full Moon in March*. There, the idea of beauty and its defilement held in an integral relation in sex receives a kind of ritualistic-allegorical treatment. As often happens, what is uttered in lyric and symbol in the poems takes a form of ritual in Yeats's dance plays. The same theme occurs with variations in three of these — *The Player Queen*, *The King of the Great Clock Tower* and *A Full Moon in March*, but most explicitly in the last. It is curious how this play has evoked divergent interpretations. The Queen has been called 'Woman' with a capital 'W', woman obsessed with the sexual act, eternally desiring ravishment; and the foul dung-bespattered Swinherd has been called the poet who is triumphant after death through the magic of his art. In other words, the play has been read—Henn, for instance, seems to read it—as the representation of the victory of Man over perverse and vicious Woman in her 'virgin cruelty', and so on.

To me the play seems the clearest emblematic representation of sex, the two characters being in the nature of elements in the total experience

The two poles of that dialectic—beauty and virgin-purity in the
delicacy and masculinity in the Swinherd—are held in an
ideal relation giving rise to the action of the play and yet are finally
transcended in the crazy ecstatic dance. The Swinherd's

My mind is running on our marriage night,
Imagining all from the first touch and kiss.

She shall bring forth her farrow in the dung.

It is to define the theme. And the Queen's:

A severed head! She took it in her hands;
She stood all bathed in blood, the blood begat.
O foul, foul, foul!

Description which applies to her as she dances with the severed head.
The Swinherd in her hand—the violence, the crazy conclusion, every-
thing completes the paradigm of sexual consummation that the play
has to present. And the ritualistic repetition of question and answer
has close:

'Why must they descend?'
'For desecration and the lover's night.'

It is something like the enactment of a religious rite.

One question remains to be asked: What made it possible for Yeats
to take the oldest of all themes in this sudden blaze? Love, copulation,
'expense of spirit in a waste of shame' have never ceased to engage
the minds of Western poets, have, indeed, been sung about and expatiated
on so greatly that what the poets have to say on the subject has served
as a kind of 'crucial' test of their greatness as poets. But, always, there
has been a limiting clan which inhibited the poet from seeing it as a metaphysic,
a symbol. Yeats alone seems to have broken himself free from that
clan. What came to his aid? Was it the utterly alien though fresh

mode of perception that his contact with the Eastern mind brought him? One senses the influence of the tantric systems, particularly that of the *Vāmamārgins*. However it is, to his new gaze the familiar theme of coupling appears transformed. Every such act becomes something like the meeting of *Prakriti* and *Purusha*. When he speaks of the bodily life, his very language takes on the flavour of Indian experience; so it would seem to some of us. To an Indian brought up in the tradition long enough for him to recognize its subtle tone and expression, Yeats's imagery awakens recognition. 'The fury and the mire of human veins' is so close to the mire of *Samsāra*, the bewildering maze of *Prapancha*. If Yeats's phrases have a familiar ring, his relaxed and tolerant attitude to the bodily life seems to bring him nearer home. Even his symbolic use of the mating of brute beast and woman as in the case of Leda and the Swan and The Player Queen and the Unicorn might conceivably bear some relationship to that Indian habit of mind, that of regarding all life as one. What is particularly significant is that it is always the male principle, the *Purusha*, that assumes the brute form. In both cases, it is an incarnation of great masculine power and majesty and of an extreme blinding, blazing kind of beauty which is more than of the earth—the power, the majesty and the beauty of the archetypal Swan and of the blue-eyed Unicorn. And there must be something vagrant and wild about *Purusha*. There is no telling among what rushes the wild swans at Coole will build:

By what lake's edge or pool
Delight men's eyes when I awake some day
To find they have flown away.
(C.P., p. 148)

And the Unicorn wanders on the plateaus of Africa or flashes in and out of the Queen's chamber beyond the grasp of man. While the female principle, *Prakriti*, remains incarnate in woman. She is the matrix of all liveliness, warmth and passion, of passion ungoverned by intellect. She is the Cretan Great Mother—whose name is cognate with matter—'at once the womb of all forms and the grave where they return to dissolution.' All this too awakens recognition.

I do not want to claim that the union of brute and woman in Yeats is specifically borrowed from the Indian *Sāṃkhya*. This is not a matter of philosophical concepts being yoked together. The fusion has taken place, for Yeats, at another level altogether, the level where the Indian

He mingles with all pagan religion and with all forms of mysti-
What is possible is that his Indian experience helped Yeats
to take the scales from his eyes. It might have helped him to gain a
renewing of the primary in sex and to seek in it a new integration.
All, what originally drew him to Tagore was that Tagore brought
to him purity and passion in a way which seemed to him entirely

THE ARTIST IN IBSEN'S *WHEN WE DEAD AWAKEN*
AND JOYCE'S *EXILES*

The last play of Ibsen was not only the occasion for Joyce's first formal appearance in print,¹ but it also inspired his sole surviving drama, *Exiles*.² The inspiration in part was technical, as the three-act structure and four-character (two men and two women) conflict show, but what perhaps gives meaning to this outward borrowing is Joyce's inner kinship with Ibsen—his concern, similar to Ibsen's, with the artist and the artist's relation to life. It is this kinship that I propose to examine here.

I

Joyce's *Fortnightly Review* article, on *When We Dead Awaken*, was not much of a critical writing: primarily an appreciation of Ibsen's newly published work, it was not designed to be so. Nevertheless, it hit the essential character of the play. In Ibsen's plays, said Joyce, what strikes us mainly is "the naked drama—either the perception of a great truth, or the opening of a great question, or a great conflict which is almost independent of the conflicting actors, and has been and is of far-reaching importance." And this is exactly what *When We Dead Awaken* does, it utters a great truth about a human activity—art. *When We Dead Awaken* is a play about an artist, his one-time model, his wife, and a bear hunter who provides an antithesis to the artist. As in most other plays of Ibsen, the story begins in the present, then it inevitably moves to the past lifting the veil from appearance, and finally it comes back to the present again to end in a catastrophe. Irene was Rubek's model in the past. Several years they worked together, she posing and he "wearing the soul" out of her beautiful body,³ and the outcome of that labour was "The Resurrection Day," Rubek's masterpiece, their "child." But while wearing out Irene's soul, Rubek also took her heart which he could

But because of his exclusive dedication to art. Not that he did not have the desire to accept, but he had to smother the desire. He smothered Irene's love too. Such smothering was doubtless a sin, but was inevitable because of the artist's extraordinary vocation. The artist is an outsider. His job is to forge life out of life—to use preciser terms, static life out of kinetic life—but he cannot do that unless he burns his material—that is, kinetic life. Moreover, his own life is to be burnt, for it has to be the smithy where the forging takes place. So Rubek's masterpiece exacted two sacrifices: the artist's love as well as the artist's desire—sacrifices of which Rubek was fully aware at the time, as his playfulness showed. When the work was over, he thanked Irene and called the whole thing an "episode." Indifference was too much for Irene to bear; she disappeared.

Rubek was not fully aware of the sacrifices, because he had a romantic notion to art. The bulge of idealism concealed the hollow of sacrifice. But with Irene's disappearance, things began to change: the hollow began to gape from under the bulge. Rubek's inspiration began to fail. Ideologically speaking, his vision was gone, for to him Irene had been an artistic vision, the embodiment of resurrection.—(He had not taken her realistically, as model she had been his aesthetic image). In other words, he was faced with a void. At a deeper level, this confirms the impossibility of life to art. There can be no art without life, for it is life that art works with. The artist is Godlike, but he is not quite God's son, for God can create out of nothing, the artist cannot. His art is an activity which must apply itself to life, an entity; and when that entity disappears, the art is left with its own absolute and made futile. Thus, lost meaning to Rubek. He took to commercializing. His "portraits" were made to order and devoid of vision. What they contained was a misanthropy arising out of his own void. Along with the isolation of art came another thing: a hunger for life. "All the talk about the artist's vocation and the artist's mission, and so forth, began to seem as being very empty, and hollow, and meaningless at bottom."⁴ This emptiness drove Rubek to life. He met Maia (as Otto Heller and Lucas have noted,⁵ Maia perhaps refers to the Hindu concept *Maya*). He married her. "The Resurrection Day" had brought him fame and wealth, now he sought the easy, indolent enjoyment of life. With Maia he tried to forget Irene, with the pleasures of life the artist's dedication.

Rubek's change was symbolized by the alterations he made to "The

Resurrection Day." In its initial version, resurrection, depicted by a pure woman, represented the artist's first vision of life. Life rises, rises eternally with all its purity and splendour—such was Rubek's vision when he was working with Irene. But in the altered version, made after Irene's disappearance, he pushed the resurrection figure a little into the background, and added forms of earthbound (unresurrected) men and women. He also inserted his own remorseful figure, remorseful because he too was earth-bound.

It is when his remorse reaches its climax that the curtain rises on the play. Rubek is found unhappy. His life with Maia has failed to give him the happiness he was looking for. Maia too is unhappy—Rubek has not kept his promise and taken her to the heights and shown her all the glories of the earth. The promise was symbolic of the prospect of happiness Rubek had with Maia. But there can be no happiness for Rubek with Maia, for she is born different. In spite of her craving for the heights, she is no mountain-climber. It is to the valley that she ultimately belongs, as her last action in the play shows. Rubek, on the other hand, is born for the heights. He can never be happy in the valley, and this he realizes before long. The indolent pleasures of life begin to seem hollow to him. He feels he has fallen, has lost his true identity, and a restlessness steals over him. An artist is born an artist and must ever remain an artist. His desire for indolent pleasures is as much an apostasy as his commercialization of art. All this Rubek becomes aware of, restlessness accompanies. In other words, he awakens.

As soon as Rubek awakens, Irene comes back. Evidently, Irene's return is not an accident, it is deeply related to Rubek's symbolic awakening. It means awakening for her too. But she awakens symbolically dead. And it is Rubek who killed her five years ago with his artist's indifference. In these five years she has polluted her body—the same body that was Rubek's source of vision. She has exposed it to flesh-hungry crowds and it has evoked kinetic desire, as her marriages witness. So Irene also has fallen, and the two falls—Rubek's and Irene's—are clearly interrelated. And now with Rubek's awakening she also awakens, though dead. At the psychological level, Irene's return corresponds to the awakening of Rubek's love for her. But this love is futile, she cannot respond to it any longer. And there lies the irony. Love is irretrievable now, and so is life, symbolically. Rubek and Irene have awakened only to discover that they are both dead, that they never lived.

Rubek and Irene's final attempt to reach for life ends in death. Yet,

They die on the heights, the peak of promise. It is interesting to note that they first meet after Irene's return in front of the hotel in Act I, before Irene's pavillion which might be said to symbolize her tomb. There the Sister of Mercy keeps her invisible watch. They next meet in Act II on the upland with the Sister of Mercy missing Irene for a while. The third time they do not meet, they appear together, on the heights. The Sister of Mercy misses Irene altogether now, and when she arrives she can do no more than say a *pax vobiscum*. She seems to represent Irene's conscience--that is, Rubek's conscience at a deeper level. The fact that her watch is ultimately ineffectual proves the desperation of Rubek and Irene's attempt to unite--their nemesis. The play's scene now moves towards their union, from the hotel porch to the upland, from the upland to the heights. Maia and Ulfheim also are on their way to union, but their union will take place in the valley and not on the mountain top. Interestingly enough, Maia finally comes to the heights, but with the first storm signs she rushes down with Ulfheim. Irene and Rubek, on the other hand, disappear in the storm, finally united in death. And there is a heroism in this dying, a tragic heroism.

Thus the story in *When We Dead Awaken* moves from the artist's dedication to art and the sacrifice involved in it to his apostasy, and from there to his awakening resulting in a tragic catastrophe. Symbolically, the story moves from the heights to the valley, and then, from the valley to the heights again. The initial heights are romantic, the artist is not fully aware of their reality; the final heights are suicidal and yet heroic, the artist is defiantly aware of their reality. Indeed the heights play a central role in the symbolism of this play. They stand for loneliness and exile. Perhaps no other human activity calls for so great an exile as art. In order to create, the artist must go outside life from where everything in life is clearly visible; the heights thus can give him the right distance. But in order to go to the heights he will have to renounce the valley, which implies sacrifice of life. It is these two--exile and sacrifice that Rubek undertook while creating "The Resurrection Day." When he plotted them, he did not see the suffering they involve. Only when his inspiration was exhausted and when the indolent pleasures he failed to compensate for the exhaustion, did he come to see it. But if he had seen it earlier, he would not have been able to do anything about it. For a "Resurrection Day" would always exact its price, no matter how one paid it consciously or unconsciously.

"The Resurrection Day" seems to play several symbolic roles in

When We Dead Awaken. One I have suggested above. I see another: a representation of art. Resurrection presupposes death. The young woman in Rubek's masterpiece is the symbol of life resurrected from death. The pattern in any resurrection is: life—death—life. In terms of Joycean aesthetics, we can call the first "life" kinetic; it is the life we live, the life we are in. The second "life" can be called static, the life that is forged out of life. A marble statue, a character in a novel, a nude in a painting, or, if we look into the artist's soul, his vision of the statue, the character, the nude—in other words the aesthetic image—is such life. But this static life comes only after a death, for in the statue, character, and nude, or in the artist's visions of them, their originals have died and been reborn. The statue is not the model, nor is the character, the nude, the model; they have lives parallel to their models'. Yet they would not have been if their models were not, it is their models who have been transformed into them. Thus art takes kinesis through death to stasis. The resurrection woman, therefore, symbolizes the birth of art (incidentally, her description reminds me of Botticelli's "Birth of Venus"). There might be a third symbolic role of "The Resurrection Day." At the psychological level, the resurrection woman is the product of Rubek's renunciation of Irene's and his love. It is by killing love (symbolically, life) that Rubek could create a statue. Thus he had to force death upon Irene and experience it himself; without that, he could not have carved a single line on marble.

Critics often read an autobiographical allusion in "The Resurrection Day" episode. They think that like Rubek, Ibsen in his old age considered all his works after the early romantic period—the period of his "Resurrection Days"—apostatic. All his so-called social plays were "portrait busts" with animal reality. No doubt the performance of *Brand* at the Copenhagen festivals on his seventieth birthday moved Ibsen very much, but to think thereby that he looked upon all his subsequent plays as utter failures would be pushing the parallel too far. Was he really trying to go back to the idealism of *Brand* in *When We Dead Awaken*? I do not think so. It seems to me that rather than going back to it he was analyzing it. However, I do not agree with F.L. Lucas either who thinks that Ibsen was questioning it.⁶ He was not questioning it, for that would imply that he was looking for or already had some solution; he was stating a tragic reality. *When We Dead Awaken* is not a problem play in the sense in which many of Ibsen's middle plays are. It is a tragedy illuminating a great truth, another manifestation in a

Way of Ibsen's iconoclastic attitude to life. What he is concerned here is art's relation to life and happiness, and who could Ibsen be model if not himself? So *When We Dead Awaken* had to be autobiographical, but autobiographical not in the narrow sense critics often take to it.

Irene's Irene has been traced to Laura Kieler, Emilie Bardach and Luitpold. / Laura Kieler was the woman who had been Ibsen's model for Nora in *A Doll's House* (she had been actually involved in a forgery for her husband's sake). In 1891 she had a four hours' interview with Ibsen in connection with a play she had written about modernism in Denmark under Georg and Edvard Brandes and their subsequent reaction on her alluding to her forgery fifteen years ago. Incidentally, papers tell us that Irene's dress in *When We Dead Awaken* is almost Laura's when she came to meet Ibsen. Furthermore, as Irene's father, Rubek, Laura had served as model for Ibsen's first world masterpiece as a consequence of which she had to suffer much (her forgery was public). However, there was apparently no love between Ibsen and Laura. The second claimant for Irene's original, Emilie Bardach, was eighteen when Ibsen met her in 1889 at Gossensass below Bremer. She was very sprightly and had quite an influence on Ibsen while (it is even said that he thought of divorcing Susanna). Probably Hilda Wangel in *The Master Builder* was modelled on her. She was, however, as Lucas has noted,⁷ more like Maia than Irene. Rosa Wiedemann saw Ibsen in Sweden in 1898 and 1899 when she came with her mother to Christiania. There is no doubt that Ibsen felt her charm. None of all three (or more—Ibsen was not insensitive to female charm) could have been the original of Irene, but the parallel should not in any way be pushed to the extreme.

They seemed to have played a more important part in the case of *Exiles*. In the first place, the exile theme came right out of Joyce's life. His elopement with Nora, his defiance of the marriage ceremony, the birth of his son Georgio (like Georgio, Archie calls his father father) were all faithfully reproduced in the play. Secondly, the exile theme had a background. Roberto Prezioso (the name of which appears in an entry in Joyce's notes for *Exiles*,⁸) a Venetian, was one of Joyce's closest friends at Trieste. He was married and had

two children. Friend of both Joyce and Nora—probably, as Richard Ellmann says,⁹ one source of Cranly's loyalty to both Stephen and Emma—he used to visit Nora for quite some time in the afternoons. Apparently he admired her, which she liked and kept her husband informed of. But "at some time in 1911 or 1912," as we have it on Ellmann's authority,¹⁰ Prezioso tried to shift into the role of a lover. Nora checked him and reported to Joyce who broke with him, at least for a while. The adulterer in *Exiles*—Robert—was probably named after him. There might have been a second source. Before Joyce ran away with Nora, his friend Cosgrave too was Nora's suitor, though she turned him down. (Cosgrave was probably the original of Lynch in *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*.) When Joyce visited Dublin in 1909, Cosgrave told him that during his intimacy with Nora he (Cosgrave) had seduced her, which was not true. But Joyce was taken by the lie and was miserable. He wrote heart-breaking letters to Nora mourning over her adultery and announcing that everything was ended between them. It was his old friend Byrne (the original of Cranly) who told him that it was "a blasted lie,"¹¹ which saved Joyce. Two other aspects of Robert Hand—apparent cordiality and secret hostility—can be traced to Gogarty. During Joyce's visit to Dublin in 1909 Gogarty pretended to be cordial, but when Joyce came again in 1912 the hostility was unconcealed. In one detail Robert can be traced to Kettle also, who wrote a note in the newspaper on Joyce and tried to find him a position at the university at the latter's temporary return to Dublin. There is another feature in *Exiles* which might be partially autobiographical: Richards' relation to his mother.

But essentially *Exiles* is a play about the artist, all other issues are secondary here. And it is the artist's exile and his attempt to return that the play deals with. The artist's exile is of two kinds: an external exile—exile from homeland, and an internal one—exile from humanity in general. One of the three courses of action Stephen plans in *A Portrait* is exile from Ireland. Stephen's explanation is clear: "Ireland is the old sow that eats her farrow."¹² This is true of any nation that demands a great deal from her children—true of colonies in particular, political or cultural. Ibsen faced the same problem, and for a while, like Yeats and other Irish literary revivalists, Ibsen joined the cause of a nationalistic literature. But before long he was disgusted with petty nationalism and left Norway. He came back only when he was old and had attained world fame. Perhaps Joyce had Ibsen's example in mind; he did not even wait for the disappointment. In Robert's leader on Richard, "A Distinguished Irish-

there is an allusion to that: "those of her children who, having been in her hour of need..."¹³ (As Ellmann has noted, some of the ambiguity and almost all of the ambiguity of this leader came from Kettle's review of *Chamber Music* in the *Freeman's Journal*.¹⁴) The creative artist's primary loyalty is to his art. When this loyalty clashes with a loyalty to the country, he might be forced into an exile, external or internal. An exile might look unethical from the nation's point of view, but on more absolute standards it is justifiable. Joyce made a difference between economic and intellectual exile (see Robert's leader), and it is the latter that Ibsen and Joyce-Stephen-Richard went into. Some might try to come to terms with national demands—Yeats did, Joyce did. But both Yeats and Tagore withdrew after some time. However, this is one solution to the problem, not the only solution. It is equally valid.

But Richard has a special problem: he is back from exile. How will his country receive him? His friend Robert is trying to find him a position. Robert writes in the newspaper, he talks to the vice-chancellor, plans to circulate favourable rumours regarding Richard's life abroad. Richard's other friend, Beatrice, extends all her moral support to Robert's efforts and waits with eager expectancy.) Robert calls Richard a pioneer of Europeanism which he thinks Ireland should practise now instead of following England. But in all this Richard suspects an element of insincerity which makes him indignant. He cannot take apparent cordiality for genuine. His book does not sell, his ideas do not appeal. He sees a certain petty complacency in Ireland's attempt to make up to him the same Ireland that refused to honour his bride and accept his common-law-union son. In Joyce's notes for *Exiles* he likens Richard to the Prodigal Son (there is a verbal allusion in the play too—"the fatted calf") and Robert to his elder brother, which explains the insincerity. Richard's indignation is the indignation of a Jonathan Swift who judged men by absolute standards (ironically, Robert compares Richard's indignation to that of Swift). Richard would appreciate the blind superstition of his mother rather than the hollow smile of his liberal friend Robert.

Clearly, Richard is a kind of test case for Joyce. No doubt like all test cases, he is an extreme case, but perhaps what Joyce wants to tell us through Richard is that every artist will ever remain an exile in his homeland. Every artist by nature is an exile—a Daedalus in spirit. In order to make his peace with homeland, he will have to make compromises. But Richard cannot make compromises. He will not go away either.

but perhaps end up as Swift in utter loneliness.

The other form of exile that Joyce deals with in his play is one in-born to all creative artists. Robert is Richard's closest friend, Beatrice his inspiration and material for writing, and Bertha his wife; and in a way all three are his creations. Robert was his disciple nine years ago, he has not changed since. Beatrice he has established by writing to her almost throughout his exile. And Bertha he has forged and fashioned completely. And yet they do not understand him. This exile is the artist's natural loneliness. In his aesthetic theory Stephen defines the supreme artist as Godlike, for like God he also creates a universe. But to be Godlike is to be lonely too. Stephen feels this loneliness all along, from his early boyhood till his decision to take up art as vocation. Richard too feels it; but unlike Stephen he tries to bridge the gulf between him and others. But his attempts fail, the voices on the strand tell him to despair.

One of the voices is Beatrice's. She was clearly in love with Richard at one time—the ashes are still preserved—but it was a futile love, because she did not know how to "give." Besides, she had pride and scorn and lacked courage. Perhaps she is the continuation of Emma Clery of *Stephen Hero* and *A Portrait*. Her name is Beatrice, and Emma too was valved off into a Beatrice at the end of *A Portrait* ("Turned off that valve at once and opened the spiritual-heroic-refrigerating apparatus, invented and patented in all countries by Dante Alighieri."¹⁰) As her name suggests, Beatrice is Richard's intellectual inspiration and is presented here caught eternally in his mind. As a result, his attempt to communicate with her will never be quite successful. He will never meet her, the real Miss Justice; he will meet Beatrice, a static figure, almost timeless, out of existence.

With Robert too Richard fails. But Robert's is a more complicated case, for Robert is involved in a triangle with Bertha and Richard. No doubt Robert was Richard's handiwork—it is Richard's language of youth that he speaks—but there has been a vulgarization of it. The impetuous Richard of the past (of "youth") would never have acted like a bourgeois while speaking the language of Nietzsche and Wagner. He would in no case have come back for an umbrella, as Robert does in Act II. Robert's words are verbatim the words of Richard's youth, but the meaning is lost; they are as overblown as his roses. Moreover, he enacts his passion in darkness (Richard calls him a thief). He is sentimental, not passionate. He is Richard after a compromise with his country. In

Richard sees a disciple who has betrayed, a disciple in eternal betrayal—Judas, a Brutus (Dante puts Judas and Brutus in the same circle of hell). But Richard-Christ-Caesar cannot do anything against this betrayal, for he cherishes freedom; he will always have faith in a Robert-Julius Brutus.

Richard does not or rather cannot use his power as husband in the gallery scene. Nor can he protect Bertha by imposing his will upon her. Like Elida in Ibsen's *Lady from the Sea*, she should have her own choice. His freedom is an absolute in Richard's world, freedom which is related to his Godliness as an artist. Only God can think of perfect freedom, and so can the artist—God's parallel. Only God and the artist can think in terms of quiddity, the other name of freedom. "I am what I am,"¹⁷ says Richard, sounding Godlike. He wants others too to be what they are. And there his attempt to bridge the gulf between him and others fails. For mankind cannot really bear very much freedom. If quiddities meet, there will be absolute freedom, but no life, for life means one quiddity encroaching upon another, life means a compromise of quiddities—dependence. Life does not rest on absolutes, life rests on relatives. But the Godlike artist, with aesthetic images of things in his mind, with their claritas-quidditas apprehended, cannot subscribe to a world of relatives.

Richard cannot check Robert or protect Bertha for yet another reason: his masochism. At heart he wants to be betrayed, so that he can suffer and out of suffering and shame build his soul anew. Richard's last words to Bertha contain these two reasons:

I have wounded my soul for you—a deep wound of doubt which can never be healed. I can never know, never in this world. I do not wish to know or to believe. I do not care. It is not in the darkness of belief that I desire you. But in restless living wounding doubt. To hold you by no bonds, even of love, to be united with you in body and soul—for this I longed.¹⁸

On the one side is his own suffering for his own self—his creative masochism, and on the other his offer of absolute freedom to others.

Richard's most important failure is with Bertha. Bertha is his wife, but what is more, she is the archetypal woman. Her name is significant (in the play's list of characters she does not have a surname), it rings out "birth," "earth," "hearth"—all suggesting the mother. Robert calls her the Moon because of her lavender dress—but as Joyce says in his notes,

the moon has a cycle of 28 days (Bertha is 28) which coincides with the female menstrual cycle. So Bertha = moon = woman. In the adultery scene Robert equals her to earth. ("The rain falling. Summer rain on the earth. Night rain. The darkness and warmth and flood of passion. Tonight the earth is loved—loved and possessed. Her lover's arms around her; and she is silent."²⁰) So again, Bertha = moon = woman = earth. In the notes Joyce suggests another image, the sea,²⁰ thus extending the equation to Bertha = moon = woman = earth = sea. Or in other words, Bertha is life, a continuation of Gretta Conroy and the Muse-girl (*A Portrait*) and an anticipation of Molly Bloom and Anna Livia Plurabelle. So, in his attempt to meet Bertha it is life that Richard wants to enter, but fails. (Robert can swim "like a stone,"²¹ that is, he dips into the water very easily. He is who will never rise again—Michael Furey, Gretta Galway's lover, and Bodkin and Kearns, Nora Joyce's earlier admirers. Joyce wrote in his notes: "Bodkin died. Kearns died. . . . I live in soul and body."²² He wanted Richard also to plunge and rise. But Richard cannot plunge, his offer of freedom to Bertha makes him stay away.)

III

The artist in *Exiles*, then, has an absolute of freedom on the one hand and on the other an urge to participate in life. The first we have attributed to his Godliness, the second naturally goes back to his humanity. And these two—his Godliness or superhumanity and his humanity—are in a tension, which is never resolved. The play ends with Bertha calling for her "strange lover" who came nine years ago. He will come again, and the same story will be repeated. What we have here, therefore, is a pattern of two forces—an everlasting pattern, and the outcome of this is the artist's eternal loneliness. He will always want to plunge into life, but his absolute of freedom will keep him away. So the artist will ever be an outsider, always hungering for life. The title of Joyce's play is, thus, of symbolic significance.

If Joyce's *Exiles* deals with the exile of the artist, Ibsen's *When We Dead Awaken* is about the death which art involves. Incidentally, there is an emphasis on the word "dead" in Archer's English rendering of Ibsen's title. Moreover, "dead" and "death" appear many times in the play which shows Ibsen's obsession with death. According to Ibsen, death is at the root of all creative activity. In the first place, the material has to die, for otherwise the kinesis of life will not be transformed into

stasis of art. No doubt the artist performs a mimetic act, but his kinesis is the reproduction not of life as such, but of his vision of life or, to use the Joycean terms, of his aesthetic image of life. A man dying in life arouses our sorrow, but a man dying in art arouses in the final analysis our pleasure. This happens because the artist does not transcribe the dying man, he presents his aesthetic image of him which is static. Thus life gives up its kinesis and attains stasis in the artist's mind—in other words, life dies in the artist's mind. A sculptor's model in the flesh is kinesis; when he approaches her solely through the senses, he approaches her kinesis. He approaches her kinesis also when he approaches her through his feelings. But when he looks at her through the aesthetic vision, he does not see her kinesis any longer, he sees a static substitute of that. Because in both purely sensual and emotional approaches, he offers her his own kinesis, but in the aesthetic approach he offers a stasis. (Stephen's sensual adventures in *A Portrait*, for example, involved kinesis, but when he saw the wading girl on the beach, his seeing was aesthetic—he was not sensually involved any longer.) And this brings in the second aspect of death in the creative process. In creativity, not only does the material die, but the artist also has to die, symbolically speaking. When he looks at life, he does not offer himself as a kinetic agent; he sees the static image, he sees statically also. Surely as a human being he lives, kinetically I mean, perhaps no less intensely than others; but when he acts as an artist, he acts in stasis. The sculptor may sensually or emotionally respond to his model, but that is his kinetic existence, his humanity. But when he approaches her aesthetically—and that is his primary business—he smothers his humanity, in other words he becomes Godlike. God has no age, he lives in an eternal stasis, he is not subject to time. The artist is Godlike, but not quite God's equal, for he has a human existence in addition to his aesthetic activity. It is this that accounts for the drama of the artist. (God has no drama, for he has no conflict; he is the absolute in which all conflicts have been resolved.)

Although Ibsen arrives at a pattern of life-death-resurrection or kinesis-death-stasis or humanity-death-Godliness, his emphasis is on death. And death appears to him as a revelation, it has a great shock of recognition. Joyce, on the other hand, is a ratiocinator. No doubt he also begins with a human situation, but he follows it up in a different way. Ibsen's characters talk, they try to recapture their past by talking, and they succeed. Joyce's characters also talk, but they talk because they are personalities looking for self-expression. They do not talk

over a problem, they talk around it, touching it from different sides. The problem remains as it was at the beginning. In that sense, there is no progression in Joyce's play; it seems as if it is enacted in the hero's mind. Like Stephen, he seems to be the only character here, all else are shadows he creates in order to catechize. Joyce deliberately made *Exiles* a "cat and mouse" play,²³ for his purpose here was to ratiocinate about the artist's nature. He took an extreme case—his own self several times magnified—and made him search intellectually. Richard is a Cartesian hero, his cogitation precedes his existence. Rubek, on the other hand, does more feeling than thinking. And perhaps that is why his discovery that death is at the root of art leads him to a fatal end. There is no shock of discovery for Richard, for to him it is chiefly a question of formulation. After all, Joyce was "steeped in the school of old Aquinas."²⁴ Perhaps that schooling of Joyce, as Francis Fergusson suggests,²⁵ saves Richard from the horror of Rubek's realization.

IV

Death has another name in Ibsen's terminology: sacrifice. The idea that art calls for sacrifice germinated decades before *When We Dead Awaken*. In 1859-60 Ibsen wrote a poem which has been translated into English as "On the Vidda." It tells of a young man who goes to the mountain heights and through a gradual renunciation of his love for the valley, symbolized in his mother and fiancée, accepts a life of loneliness. The choice it involves seems to be of the same kind as Kierkegaard's ethical choice (Ibsen received considerable influence from Kierkegaard). The next work where Ibsen dealt with this question is a play written about the same time: *Love's Comedy*. There Falk, a poet, and his beloved Svanhild renounce their love, for they know that it only will decay if they make everyday use of it. Better Falk should cherish it in mind for ever as an inspiration. So Falk goes away to the lonely mountains. Though Brand is not an artist (Brand is a priest), the play of that title is in the same vein as "On the Vidda" and *Love's Comedy*, its central conflict being that of calling and love. Besides, as Ibsen himself said, Brand could have been an artist as well. The play is no less autobiographical than the earlier play or poem. Brand's sacrifices are his mother, son, wife, and finally himself. The play ends, as *When We Dead Awaken*, with an avalanche and two words of Latin.

The play which follows *Brand*, *Peer Gynt*, deals with sacrifice on a

wider level (the question of redemption), but there the vision is Dantesque. Also, the hero himself never sacrifices. He certainly has a gift of imagination, but he uses that to avoid reality (witness, for instance, his imaginary ride with his mother to an imaginary castle on the eve of her death). Peer is the poetic escapist.

Sacrifice occupies the centre of art again in *The Master Builder*. Solness' success, his so-called happiness, is built on the sorrows of his wife. Her parents' house was burnt, her children died, she can no longer build a house in her own way—in other words, her whole life has been the price for Solness' art.

In *When We Dead Awaken* the question of sacrifice was pushed to its extreme. Solness suffered from an intense sense of guilt, so does Rubek: but while Solness got a Hilda to heal him, Rubek has only a Maia who in the ultimate analysis magnifies it. Solness defied his humanity at the end, Rubek cannot. He understands his fate. The idealism of will which Ibsen depicted in *Brand* and in *The Master Builder* is now gone, it is replaced by as it were an idealism of acceptance. Rubek does not deny his humanity, he takes his tension between Godliness and humanity as a tragic inevitability.

V

While Ibsen stressed sacrifice or death in his vision of the artist, Joyce emphasized loneliness or exile. In his second portrait of the artist,²⁶ "The Holy Office," an angry broadside against contemporary Irish writing, Joyce declared:

I stand the self-doomed, unafraid,
Unfellowed, friendless and alone,
Indifferent as the herring-bone,
Firm as the mountain-ridges where
I flash my antlers on the air.

No doubt this is purely autobiographical, but are not Joyce's all portraits of the artist for that matter essentially autobiographical? (It is worth noting that the first two lines of this excerpt sound very close to Ibsen's first seminal work on the artist—"On the Vidda.")

Within a year of his elopement with Nora, Joyce wrote a story illustrating the futility of absolute loneliness. The original of Mr. Duffy, the hero of "A Painful Case," was supposed to have been Stanislaus, but

Joyce gave him one or two of his own traits too. Like Joyce, Mr. Duffy is an admirer of Hauptmann (the translation of *Michael Kramer* on Mr. Duffy's desk is very probably Joyce's own). Besides, interestingly enough, Mr. Duffy's first name also is James. But there is a significant difference; while Mr. Duffy's friendship with Mrs. Sinico comes to nothing, Joyce's affair with Nora proved fruitful. Mr. Duffy is perhaps the symbol of the Godlike artist in his absolute detachment from life. Life comes to him in the form of Mrs. Sinico. But when it is about to involve him, the Godlike artist recoils. The result is a catastrophe, but more important is Mr. Duffy's realization of his futile existence. Perhaps with "A Painful Case" Joyce wanted to justify his own solution, involvement with life. His alter ego, Mr. Duffy, fails as an artist; Joyce succeeds.

Joyce's most elaborate treatment of the artist is of course in *A Portrait*. On analysis it reveals a pattern of the two component parts of the artist's self. In the first chapter the book describes the awakening of Stephen's senses or, in other words, the awakening of his humanity. But along with it there grows in him a sense of loneliness. He feels he is distant from his fellow students at Clongowes Wood. The loneliness increases in Chapter II. Everywhere—in the family, among the people he visits, with his father and father's boyhood friends—Stephen is mentally an outsider, like Shelley's companionless moon. His humanity tries to build bridges, but the only one he succeeds in building is that of sensuality. Chapter III, dealing with his consciousness of sin (following from his sensual adventures) and his penance, introduces a new direction in which his tension could be resolved: through a Christian renunciation of his pride (his loneliness contained an element of pride). But soon his pride begins to re-assert itself. And when the director of his college offers him priesthood, in a semi-epiphany he perceives the imprisonment that religion would entail. What he wants is freedom, and the epiphany on the strand reveals to him his free and Godlike self. But he could be an Icarus as well, so his Godliness alone cannot make him an artist. To be an artist he will have to have humanity too, he will have to be a Daedalus. Hence the episode of the wading girl who symbolizes life. Thus, it is by accepting life and at the same time by being distant from it, by striking a balance between his humanity and Godliness, that Stephen Dedalus can become an artist. His resolution "to live, to err, to fall, to triumph, to recreate life out of life"²⁷ illustrates this balance. How can he "recreate life out of life" unless he himself lives? Also, how can he "recreate life out of life" unless he "triumphs," unless he rises out

of life? Thus creativity asks for an immersion into life and at the same time a resurrection from it—the two must go together: the artist's humanity and his Godliness. Like Daedalus, the artist's soul must fly *between* the sea (life) and the sun (resurrection²⁸).

The artist loses this happy balance in *Exiles* and *Ulysses*. Not too far from *A Portrait*, *Exiles* is *A Portrait* with its balance replaced by a tension. Evidently, Joyce was in a questioning mood. It was the beginning of his middle period (he wrote *Exiles* at thirty-two) —that time when one might naturally fall to questioning. The answer partly came in *Ulysses*, but it was a negative answer. The tension is gone, it is one element that mostly dominates the artist now, his Godliness. (Stephen is afraid of water in *Ulysses*. Richard did not touch water either, but he did not show any fear.) There is an additional answer to Joyce's middle-period questioning in *Ulysses*, the father-figure is introduced. And it is Bloom and not Stephen who is the hero of the book, and, if anything, Bloom is not an artist. Although the artist—the son-figure here—is on his way to becoming a part of a larger pattern (the family), he still retains some of his former importance. The shift is completed in *Finnegans Wake*. Shem the penman—his stature has largely diminished from the analogue of God paring his fingernails in *A Portrait*—is in the first place a son and then also a brother.

Thus, Joyce's interest in the artist went through different phases. The first ended with *A Portrait*. It contained the proud idealism of "The Holy Office," the sincere fear of "A Painful Case," and the happy self-confidence of *A Portrait*. The second phase was covered by *Exiles*, the phase of questioning. *Ulysses* was transitional, though it already marked the beginning of a third phase which was represented by *Finnegans Wake*. These phases correspond to the different periods of Joyce's life. In his youth, his main concern was his vocation, its choice and its justification. In old age the family was his principal interest. Both the vocation and the family concerned him in his middle years.

It would, then, be unfair to expect Joyce's complete vision of the artist from *Exiles*, though, like all other artist portrayals of Joyce, it also took a deep look into the fundamental problems of the artist. Ibsen's *When We Dead Awaken* had an advantage over *Exiles* here. After all it was the last of Ibsen's series on the artist and also his very last play.

1 "Ibsen's New Drama," *Fortnightly Review*, n.s., LXVII (April 1, 1900), 575-590, cited in *The Critical Writings of James Joyce*, ed. Ellsworth Mason and Richard Ellmann (New York, 1959), pp. 47-67.

2 Joyce wrote another play, but it has been lost. From Stanislaus Joyce's recollection of it in *My Brother's Keeper* (New York, 1958), pp. 115-121, *A Brilliant Career* also must have been very Ibsenesque.

3 Citations from *When We Dead Awaken* in my text are to *Henrik Ibsen: The Last Plays*, trans. William Archer (New York, 1959).

4 See Heller, *Henrik Ibsen: Plays and Problems* (Boston and New York, 1912), p. 314, and Lucas, *The Drama of Ibsen and Strindberg* (London, 1962), p. 286.

5 Pp. 187-88.

6 See *op. cit.*

7 See *ibid.*

8 Citations from *Exiles* and its notes in my text are to the Viking Press edn. (New York, 1962).

9 See *James Joyce* (New York, 1959), p. 327.

10 *Ibid.*

11 *Ibid.*, p. 290.

12 The Viking Press edn. (New York, 1963), p. 203.

13 P. 99.

14 See *op. cit.*, p. 271.

15 P. 45.

16 P. 252.

17 P. 103.

18 P. 112.

19 P. 87.

20 See p. 118.

21 P. 27.

22 P. 118.

23 P. 123.

24 "The Holy Office," cited in *Critical Writings*, p. 152.

25 See "A Reading of *Exiles*," in the New Directions edn. of *Exiles* (Norfolk, Connecticut), pp. v-xviii.

26 The first was an autobiographical half-essay half-narrative he wrote for *Dana* (Eglinton and Fred Ryan's intellectual journal): "A Portrait of the Artist." *Dana* rejected it. However, it was the seed of *Stephen Hero* and *A Portrait*.

27 P. 172.

28 The sun symbolizes resurrection, for though in the evening the sun falls into the sea it rises in the morning again.

RITUAL OF A LOST FAITH

I have always sought to bring my mind close to the mind of Indian and Japanese poets, old women in Cennacht, mediums in Soho, lay brothers whom I imagine dreaming in some mediaeval monastery the dreams of their village, learned authors who refer all to antiquity.

W. B. Yeats

The saner and the greater mythologies are not fancies; they are the utterance of the whole soul of man and, as such, inexhaustible to meditation.

I. A. Richards

In his essay 'The Return of Ulysses' (1896) Yeats said that when a poet 'rids his verse of heterogeneous knowledge and irrelevant analysis ... the little ritual of his verse resembles the great ritual of Nature.'¹ This statement is intelligible in a wider context than Yeats's rejection of the cult of Science and his desire to substitute symbols for scientific attractions and concepts, though that seems to be his ostensible wish even as late as the introduction to the 1925 edition of *A Vision*: 'I wished for a system of thought that would leave my imagination free to create what it chose and yet make all it created, or could create, part of one history, and that the soul's.' The resemblance of the 'Little ritual of verse' with the 'Great ritual of Nature' suggests a tradition both in Europe and in India which can be traced through the Romantics, Berkeley, Sidney, Emerson and Plotinus on the one hand and the Vedantic, Buddhist and Advaita philosophical systems on the other. This tradition holds that the 'Little Mind' as one of the modes of manifestation of the 'Great Mind' is in many ways analogous to it. Both have a transcendent and a creative aspect. Both contain in their consciousness the potential forms that are likely to be, and both have an urge to manifest, to experience out, for, if they were not to have that, neither would be consciousness or Self but only an object, something like a jar. And since both are

self-luminous and self-conscious, both throb into creativity to realize themselves, to make and remake themselves. It is invariably an experience of consciousness free from all external reference and resting on its inseparable aspect, the Self, and as such of 'joy' or 'ecstasy.' All creation is a process of experiencing out of the Self, what, if I may be permitted to quote, the *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* describes as "At first [logically and not chronologically] there was only *Sat* (Truth), all alone without a second. He gazed and bethought to Himself 'May I be many, may I procreate.'" What is created, then, is only a medium and not an object, a mode of thinking and not a thing, something resembling a mirror where images float acting and reacting one upon another as emblems of the Self.

The process of creation or manifestation in either the Great Mind or the Little Mind begins with dreaming. Both *Yogāvashishta*, a Vedantic document, and the Buddhist *Lankāvatara* repeatedly show parallelism between creation and dreaming. This, of course, is a passing phase. With the greater urge to create, the hazy, nebulous and dimly perceived world (for which the Saivas have an apt adjective—*dhyamāla*: 'transic') begins to be presented not as an indistinguishable unity but as a world of distinctions, as the world of many. The creative energy polarizes consciousness as 'I' and 'This', as Subject and Object, not as separate but as distinguishable. The process of manifestation, as a process of concretisation, gives rise to distinctions and differentiations, yet these distincts melt into a unity because the creative mind transcends through them to a knowledge of itself.

In this tradition the Universe is, then, not a series of fragments related to each other through cause and effect, relationships which reason, science or the abstracting mind can understand, but a living thought, a vast conception of Imagination, articulated through stones and water, gods, faeries and demons, and the mind of man. The universe becomes a vast ritual and the objects become expansive symbols enacting that ritual, revealing continuously the thoughts and passions of divine mind. It is a sacred play creating images both in and out of time. The ritual in this tradition is of ceremony, of worship and surrender, of emotional expansion and spontaneity rather than of preservation and recognition of individuality. Whereas it is massive and vast, it remains anonymous. It could provide only one aspect of the complex vision which Yeats was seeking: a vision synthesising the immense and the small, the Universal and the particular, the infinite expansibility and the temporal finitude. That perhaps is the implication of his dual allegiance to the Asians and

the Greeks, to the 'Asiatic vague immensities' of 'The Statues' and the Pythagorean 'numbers': 'The Christ who has moved the world was half Indian, half Greek in temper.'²

However, it is this tradition that Yeats invokes in his statement that the 'little ritual' of verse resembles the 'great Ritual' of Nature. It is true as Nathan says in *the Tragic Drama of William Butler Yeats* that Yeats never clearly defines the Supernatural but I wonder whether it can ever be so defined. The only way is to enact it through metaphors, and Yeats does employ a variety of metaphors to approach an understanding: 'Great Memory', 'Secret Rose', 'Infinite', 'Ruler of All', 'Universal Imagination', 'Divine Ecstasy', 'Immortal Fire'.³ But, whatever be his metaphors, he seems to maintain that the Universe is alive with thought and memory and that every thing in it is continuous with one Mind and that things not only communicate one with another but with the one Mind as well. To reveal this Unity is the purpose and function of poetry, and the poet, to enact this ritual, may invoke magic or occult practices, states of trance and incantation. All these may be the key to forgotten wisdom. Yeats says so frankly in the closing paragraphs of *A Vision* (1925 edition): 'A book of modern philosophy may prove to our logical capacity that there is a transcendental portion of our being that is timeless and spaceless.. and yet our imagination remains subjected to nature as before.... It was not with ancient philosophy because the ancient philosopher had something to reinforce his thought,...the gods, the Sacred Dead, Egyptian Theurgy, the Priestess Diotima....I would restore to the philosopher his mythology.' The quest to recover ancient wisdom or mythology encompassing the transcendental and the natural, the creative and the conceptual, seems to be the impulse behind the folk-tale material, the childhood dreams of the Sligo countryside, the country stories of the Middletons, the spirit at Rosses that looked like a flat-iron, Mary Battle whose daily speech gave 'much of my Celtic Twilight.'⁴ There is no systematic attempt at learning but a collection of a handful of dreams': 'The voices melted into the twilight, and were mixed into the trees, and when I thought of the words they too melted away, and were mixed with the generations of men. Now it was a phrase, now it was an attitude of mind, an emotional form, that had carried my memory to older verses, or even to forgotten mythologies. I was carried so far that it was as though I came to one of the four rivers, and followed it under the wall of Paradise to the roots of the Trees of Knowledge and of Life.'⁵ Take for instance 'Dust hath closed Helen's Eye' which enacts in a limited

way the image which was made permanent in the second part of 'The Tower,' of Thoor Ballylee, Mary Hynes, and Raftery:

Some few remembered still when I was young
A peasant girl commended by a song...

(*Collected Poems*, p. 219.

Hereafter C.P.)

The old, poor, half-blind poet, the 'handsome girl in Ireland,' and the landscape of Ballylee are linked with the mythology of Troy encompassing 'sorrow of beauty and magnificence and penury of dreams.' Remembered fragments of peasant talk which still carry the wonder and magic of the old wisdom evoke a world which, though rooted in the soil 'where all' great art is, is also a revelation of 'some country where all classes share in a half-mythological, half-philosophical folk-belief which the writer and his small audience lift into a new subtlety.'⁶ The principle at work in *The Celtic Twilight* and *The Land of Heart's Desire* is stated in one of the early reviews: 'To the greater poets everything they see has its relation to the national life, and through them to the universal and divine life: nothing is an isolated artistic moment; there is a unity everywhere; everything fulfils a purpose that is not its own; the hailstorm is a journeyman of God; the grass blade carries the universe upon its point. But to this universalism, this seeing of unity everywhere, you can only attain through what is near you, your nation, or, if you be no traveller, your village and the cobwebs on your wall.'⁷

The unity of man, nature, and supernature which Yeats felt had been broken into fragments by science, reason and the abstracting mind of the Anglo-Saxons seems to be the feeling behind the Essays collected together in *Ideas of Good and Evil* (1903) and the three volumes of *The Works of William Blake* (1893) done in collaboration with Edwin Ellis. 'From the vegetable-glass' of Nature 'where the heart withers' he turns to the imagination which embodies in words of the poet his dreams and visions 'for I am certain that the imagination has some way of lighting on the truth that the reason has not.' 'It is'. Yeats quotes Blake with approval, 'the divine bosom into which we shall all go after the death of the vegetated body. The world of imagination is infinite and eternal, whereas the world of generation or vegetation is finite and temporal. There exists in that eternal world the realities of everything which we see reflected in the vegetable-glass of nature.'⁹ He sees in the figure of Cassandra and

Helen and Deidre, and Lear and Tristan 'Images of the primitive imagination mirrored in the little looking-glass of the modern and classic imagination.'¹⁰ Who knows what are called dreams may, perhaps, be essences and what are called realities may turn out to be accidents? For, after all, Yeats says "all folk literature and all literature that keeps the folk tradition, delights in unbounded and immortal things. The *Kalevala* delights in the seven hundred years that Luonation wanders in the depths of the sea with Wainamoinen in her womb, and the Mohomedan king in the *Song of Roland*, pondering upon the greatness of Charlemagne, repeats over and over 'He is three hundred years old, when will he be weary of war?'...Osin, new come from his three hundred years of faeryland, and of the love that is in faeryland, bids Saint Patrick cease his prayers a while and listen to the blackbird, because it is the blackbird of Darrycarn that Finn brought from Norway, three hundred years before, and set its nest upon the oak-tree with his own hands. Surely if one goes far enough into the woods, one will find there all that one is seeking? Who knows how many centuries the birds of the woods have been singing?"¹¹ The mythical characters, the woods, and the singing birds, though involved in an immediate act, have become ageless gestures of an unanalysable essence, almost a repetitive chorus in a sacred drama which heaves through a bodily form.

The whole universe is a medium of contemplation and not an accidental chronicle of things and circumstance explicable in terms of reason or dogma. It is 'an endlessly intermarrying family'¹² where each is distinct yet 'expressive and symbolic....every form, every sound, every colour, every gesture, a signature of some unanalysable imaginative essence.' From the trivial things 'that go/About my table to and fro' to the drama 'of bearing a hero 'when world-transforming Charlemagne was conceived,' all is involved in 'Truth's consuming ecstasy/No place for love and dreams at all/For God goes by with a white footfall.' The immediate and the transcendent coexist. The immediate is the experiencing out of the transcendent, or the transcendent is rooted in the immediate for that is its creative power. That seems to be the significance of what the heroine says in 'Chosen' although she puts the case with 'excessive learning':

If questioned on
My utmost pleasure with a man
By some new-married bride, I take
That stillness for a theme

Where his heart my heart did seem
And both adrift on the miraculous stream
Where—wrote a learned astrologer—
The Zodiac is changed into a sphere. (*C.P.*, p. 311).

Everything participates in time and the timeless. 'The stallion of eternity' mounts the 'mare of time.' Life participates in both Eternity and Time and every moment is both fleeting and revelatory. It lives and yet dies to live again. It participates in wisdom and love, the Sphinx and the Buddha, like a girl in 'The Double Vision of Michael Robartes':

O little did they care who danced between
And little she by whom her dance was seen
So she had outdanced thought.
Body to perfection brought,

For what but eye and ear silence the mind
With the minute particulars of mankind?
Mind moved yet seemed to stop
As 'twere a spinning-top.

In contemplation had those three so wrought
Upon a moment, and so stretched it out
That they, time overthrown,
Were dead yet flesh and bone. (*C.P.*, pp. 193-4).

The Universe, then, is a 'great procession'¹³ of things, enacting a ritual which no abstract geometry can categorise, no science can reduce to concepts and understandable relationships, and no religious dogma explain away. 'They act,' Yeats says in the essay 'Magic,' 'because the great memory associates them with certain events, and moods and persons.'¹⁴ They carry in their particular instance what has been and is eternally always. The Great Mind continuously experiences out yet, what it experiences, is itself; 'All men are dancers and their tread/Goes to the barbarous clangour of a gong.' The thing is not an idea and to use Ezra Pound here from his context of the 'Image,' 'It is a radiant node or cluster; it is what I can, and must perforce, call a vortex, from which, and through which, and into which, ideas are constantly rushing.' In fact Yeats makes it clear in some lines which he wrote in 1923 in 'The Gift of Harun Al-Rashid':

The signs and shapes:
All those abstractions that you fancied were

From the great Treatise of Parmenides;
 All, all those gyres and cubes and midnight things
 Are but a new expression of her body
 Drunk with the bitter sweetness of her youth. (C.P., p. 519)

Something to the same effect Yeats says in 'The Symbolism of Poetry': "If I watch a rushy pool in the moonlight my emotion at its beauty is mixed with memories of the man that I have seen ploughing by its margin, or of the lovers I saw there a night ago; but if I look at the moon herself and remember any of her ancient names and meanings, I move among divine people, and things that have shaken off our mortality, the tower of ivory, the queen of waters, the shining stag among enchanted woods, the white hare sitting upon the hilltop, the fool of Faery with his shining cup full of dreams, and it may be 'make a friend of one of these images of wonder,' and 'meet the Lord in the air.' So, too, if one is moved by Shakespeare, who is content with emotional symbols that he may come nearer to our sympathy, one is mixed with the whole spectacle of the world; while if one is moved by Dante, or by the myth of Demeter, one is mixed with the shadows of God or of a Goddess. So, too, one is furthest from symbols when one is busy doing this or that, but the soul moves among symbols and unfolds symbols when trance, or madness or deep meditation has withdrawn it from every impulse but its own."¹⁵

If the whole universe is a symbolic ritual or a community of ritualistic moods ever new and ever ancient, then literature or the arts is 'revelation, and not a criticism,'¹⁶ a creation 'of a sacred book' and not a chronicle of 'circumstances, or passionless phantasies, and passionless meditations.' 'Every thing that can be seen, touched, measured, explained, understood, argued over,' thinks Yeats in the essay 'The Moods', 'is to the imaginative artist nothing more than a means, for he belongs to the invisible life, and delivers its ever new and ever ancient revelation. We hear much of his need for the restraints of reason, but the only restraint he can obey is the mysterious instinct that has made him an artist, and that teaches him to discover immortal moods in mortal desires, an undecaying hope in our trivial ambitions, a divine love in sexual passion.'¹⁷ In fact Yeats believes that the arts are about to take upon their shoulders 'the burdens that have fallen from the shoulders of priests and to lead us back upon our journey by filling our thoughts with the essences of things, and not with things. We are about to substitute once more the distillation of alchemy for the analyses of Chemistry.'¹⁸ The poet does not 'see like a naturalist.' He is not interested in things and their acci-

dental relation to one another. He is, in the phrase of Rimbaud 'a see-er', a 'voyant' who might have to pass through 'an speakable torture in which he has need of superhuman faith and strength, in which he becomes above all others the arch-sufferer, the arch-criminal, the arch-damned soul... and the supreme sage. For he has reached the unknown.' Whatever may be the other implications of such an attitude, occultism, practice of magic, or a state of no-reason (deliberately willed)...it suggests a faith in the existence of a super-rational world that can be apprehended by pre-rational modes but in which the rational identity remains intact. Even when references are made to 'suffering,' 'torture,' and to 'losing the understanding of vision' it is more in the nature of a consciously lucid victim.

As a priest of the 'Divine labyrinth' or of 'the winding movement of Nature'¹⁹ often referred to metaphorically as the 'Serpent' or 'mirror-scaled Serpent' of 'Supernatural Songs' (reminding some of the Chinese Buddhist Dragon), the poet is involved in the ritual of ceremony and sacrifice, of worship and adoration. The sacrificial aspect in Yeats is different from that of the East. Whereas in the East it is a continuous surrender of the self to the great Self without a sense of loss of identity, in Yeats it is a tragic confrontation, 'immortal passion in mortal hearts.' The early poetry is the poetry of ceremony, a ceremony conducted through dreams, magic, occult practices, 'the cry of the heart against necessity,' the poetry after the twenties is a ritual of sacrifice encompassing within it the richness of earlier enactment through dreams, magic, and occult practices:

And I declare my faith:
I mock Plotinus' thought
And cry in Plato's teeth,
Death and life were not
Till man made up the whole,
Made lock, stock and barrel
Out of his bitter soul,
Aye, sun and moon and star, all,
And further add to that
That, being dead, we rise,
Dream and so create
Translunar Paradise.
I have prepared my peace
With learned Italian things
And the proud stones of Greece,
Poet's imaginings
And memories of love,

Memories of words of women,
All those things whereof
Man makes a superhuman
Mirror-resembling dream. ('The Tower,' *C.P.*, p. 223-24).

is 'superhuman/Mirror-resembling dream' dispossesses in reality the concerns of the body:

Now shall I make my soul,
Compelling it to study
In a learned school
Till the wreck of body,
Slow decay of blood,
Testy delirium
Or dull decrepitude,
Or what worse evil come—
The death of friends, or death
Of every brilliant eye
That made a catch in the breath—
Seem but the clouds of the sky
When the horizon fades;
Or a bird's sleepy cry
Among the deepening shades. (*C.P.*, p. 224-25)

It is the sacrificial ritual, the inherent tragic performance of the poet-priest that creates new beauty. By 'withering into truth' he transfigures himself to experience gaiety like Hamlet or Lear:

They know that Hamlet and Lear are gay;
Gaiety transfiguring all that dread. ('Lapis Lazuli, *C.P.*, p. 338)

'In all great tragedies, tragedy is a joy to the man who dies,' Yeats says in his introduction to *The Oxford Book of Modern Verse*, 'in Greece the tragic chorus danced.' The size of the theatre or the number of the cast does not enhance the tragic effect:

All men have aimed at, found and lost;
Black out; Heaven blazing into the head;
Tragedy wrought to its uttermost.
Though Hamlet rambles and Lear rages,
And all the drop-scenes drop at once
Upon a hundred thousand stages,
It cannot grow by an inch or an ounce.

It is a repetitive ritual: 'All things fall and are built again./And those who build them again are gay' and is constantly performed:

Every discoloration of the stone,
 Every accidental crack or dent,
 Seems a water-course or an avalanche,
 Or lofty slope where it still snows
 Though doubtless plum or cherry-branch
 Sweetens the little half-way house
 Those Chinamen climb towards, and I
 Delight to imagine them seated there;
 There, on the mountain and the sky,
 On all the tragic scene they stare.
 One asks for mournful melodies;
 Accomplished fingers begin to play.
 Their eyes mid many wrinkles, their eyes,
 Their ancient glittering eyes, are gay. (*C.P.*, p. 339)

It is an act of faith and reason that makes us rejoice in the midst of this tragic ritual. It is not a withdrawal but a recognition, an apocalyptic vision in which the sense of life asserts itself in complete confrontation of all that makes it meaningless. Is that why Yeats says in 'An Acre of Grass':

Grant me an old man's frenzy,
 Myself must I remake
 Till I am Timon and Lear
 Or that William Blake
 Who beat upon the wall
 Till Truth obeyed his call:

A mind Michael Angelo knew
 That can pierce the clouds,
 Or inspired by frenzy
 Shake the dead in their shrouds;
 Forgotten else by mankind,
 An old man's eagle mind. (*C.P.*, p. 347)

This is the 'old simple celebration of life turned to the highest pitch,'²⁰ the restoration of the 'heroic art' that sustained ancient civilizations, a yearning for life and earth and that which is transcendent. Engelberg in his essay 'He too was in Arcadia' rightly remarks, 'Reality is neither a mystical union with God nor the terrible confrontation of alienation—it is both.'²¹

Civilisation is hooped together, brought
 Under a rule, under the semblance of peace
 By manifold illusion: but man's life is thought,
 And he, despite his terror, cannot cease
 Ravening through century after century,

Ravaging, raging, and uprooting that he may come
Into the desolation of reality: ('Meru,' *C.P.*, p. 333)

But before Yeats has light and 'light is perception (the greater the
lon the more clear the perception)'²² he passes through the phase of
ms. the ceremony of shaping the soul, necessarily involving a
nteness from common life and the exclusion of a part of one's world.
to dream is not to be forgetful of the possible experience of the
es. It is only an attempt, 'a phasal in our thought' as Yeats would
'for ultimate reality is a phaseless sphere,'²⁴ to disentangle the self-
scious mind from the objective aspect of experience and the rationali-
lon of the intellect. This is the first pole of the two poles, 'the per-
nal and the impersonal' which the 'mind or imagination or conscious-
s of man may be said to have ... or, as Blake preferred to call them,
limit of contraction and the unlimited expansion. When we act from
e personal we tend to bind our consciousness down as to a fiery centre.
lien, on the other hand, we allow our imagination to expand away
om the egoistic mood, we become vehicles for the universal thought
nd merge in the universal mood.'²⁵ Uudoubtedly a poet writes of his
ersonal life, but it is not a confessional mood, because he is 'more a
ype than a man, more passion than type.'²⁶ Dreaming, then, is the
remony of discovering the inner soul which emerges, as Stock says,
when all outward preoccupations are stilled, like a shy ghost, to possess
he deserted landscape.'²⁷ I should go a step further: dreaming is the
rst creative vibration. The dreamer is also the creator: we 'Dream and
o create/Translunar Paradise,' 'Phidias gave women dreams and dreams
their looking glass,' 'I dream of a Ledeian body,' 'Man makes a super-
human/Mirror-resembling dream.' Dreams create reality; what does not
exist we dream, 'A man who does not exist/A man who is but a dream.'
In fact 'where nothing is, there is God.'

His early dreams might have been of islands,²⁸ 'I am haunted by
numberless islands. . . /Where Time would surely forget us, and Sorrow
come near us no more': or he might have dreamt of elemental beings,
older and wiser than human beings:

In flood, in fire, in clay, and wind,
They huddle from man's pondering mind,
Yet he who treads in austere ways
May surely meet their ancient gaze.
Man ever journeys on with them
After the red-rose-bordered hem.. (*C.P.*, p. 57).

Yet his dreams are often conducted in rhythms of deep, brooding serenity and the epithets are purely evocative, more to create a mood than a picture:

Under the passing stars, foam of the sky,
Lives on this lonely face. (C.P., p. 41).

or

Stars, grown old
In dancing silver-sandalled on the sea,
Sing in their high and lonely melody. (C.P., p. 35).

Yeats summons his heart to where

...the mystical brotherhood
Of sun and moon and hollow and wood
And river and stream work out their will;
And God stands winding His lonely horn,
And time and world are ever in flight. (C.P., p. 66).

The ceremonial of dreams gave Yeats 'old abounding, nonchalant reverie,' 'half-philosophical, half-mythological folk-beliefs,' 'old forms and old situations,' subtle, brooding songs, nostalgia and regret for what has been sacrificed and lost, but had he been content with dreams he would have been a 'Romantic fish' that 'swam in nets coming to hand.' If civilisations die as Toynbee says 'through idolation of the ephemeral soul,' creative energy is also atrophied by remaining caught in the nets of dreams. With the expansion of the creative energy, the desire to experience out begins, though what is experienced is still itself. Yeats might have learnt from Shelley's *Defence*: 'Poetry enlarges the circumference of the imagination by replenishing it with thoughts of ever new delight... which form new intervals and interstices whose void for ever craves for fresh food.' Poetry 'bursts the circumference of the reader's mind and pours itself forth together with it into the universal element with which it has perpetual sympathy.' The outward surge begins, the centre perpetually remains. Yeats says, 'The imagination is enlarged by a sympathy with pains and passions so mighty, that they distend in their conception the capacity of that by which they are conceived' but 'that which is before our eyes perpetually vanishes and returns again in the midst of the excitement it creates.'²⁹ It is true he echoes Shelley for whom poetry is 'at once the centre and circumference of knowledge,' the poet measures the

circumference and sounds the depths of human nature.' Yeats expands himself; he says in 'Discoveries': 'If it be true that God is a circle whose centre is everywhere, the saint goes to the centre, the poet and the artist to the ring where everything comes round again. The poet must not seek for what is still and fixed, for that has no life for him.'³⁰ The burden of dreams is lessened to test the self-conscious mind or awareness but only to return, perhaps, to it with a richer complexity 'forms that are or seem/When sleepers wake and yet still dream' ('Under Ben Bulbin'). Call it the 'vast design' coalescing living dreams and dreaming life or 'resinous...foul rag-and-bone shop' or a balance between flux and conscious limitation or a Unity of Being, an expansion and enrichment of what he says in the opening poem 'Dream, dream, for this is also sooth' with the 'themes of the embittered heart' to finally say, 'He that sings a lasting song/Thinks in a narrow bone.'

Between dream and dream, between the faeries' refrain in 'The Stolen Child,' 'Come away, O human child/To the waters and wild/With a faery, hand in hand,/For the world's more full of weeping than you can understand,' and the rock-like epitaph he made for himself in 'Under Ben Bulbin', 'Cast a cold eye/On life on death. Horseman, pass by, lies the whole of heroic ritual, the sacrificial dance of the endless process of becoming towards being. 'Consciousness is conflict'³¹ and out of this conflict, this war between becoming and being, the natural and the supernatural are born 'Those images that yet/Fresh images beget....' Passion which, again, is conflict, is the business of a poet; it is the straining of man's being against some obstacle that obstructs its unity. In *Per Amica Silentia Lunae* Yeats remarks, 'When a starved or banished passion shows in a dream we...break the logic that had given it the capacity of action and throw it into chaos again. But passions, when we know they cannot find fulfilment, become vision.'³² Passion breeds tension, it fashions itself into tragedy and converts reverie into wisdom. It extends towards reality, for reality is recognition. Yeats feels, 'Nor has any poet I have read of or heard of or met with been a sentimentalist. The other self, the anti-self or the antithetical self, as one may choose to name it, comes but to those who are no longer deceived, whose passion is reality,'³³ It is This 'final joy' out of conflict which Yeats discussed in 'Other Matters'³⁴ and which he expresses in 'The Gyres':

What matter though numb nightmare ride on top,
And blood and mire the sensitive body stain?
What matter? Heave no sigh, let no tear drop.

A greater, a more gracious time has gone;
 For painted forms or boxes of make-up
 In ancient tombs I sighed, but not again;
 What matter? Out of caverns comes a voice,
 And all it knows is that one words 'Rejoice'. (C.P., p. 337).

So we always 'Climb to our proper dark, that we may trace/The lineaments of a plummet-measured face.' (C.P., p. 376). The poet does not 'seek images,' he contemplates the procession 'all that is for ever passing away that it may come again.' 'Is it,' Yeats asks, 'that all things are made by the struggle of the individual and the world, of the unchanging and the returning?'³⁵ And he might have added: the struggle of the 'little mind' and the 'Great Mind?' Perhaps Yeats's answer is: There is an enormous tension between an endless flux and permanence, motion and stillness:

if no change appears
 No moon; only an aching heart
 Conceives a changeless work of art. (C.P., p. 228).

It is Cuchulain's struggle with the waves. Life is roots and branches and tree; sky and earth, the dancer and the dance; and above all flood and tide. There is no final commitment, no immersion in the dolphin-torn and gong-tormented tide. That is ancient wisdom, the endless pursuit of infinity with no measure of certainty: 'either with the soul from myth to union with the source of all, the breaking of the circle, or from the myth to reflection and the circle renewed for better or worse. For better or worse according to one's life, but never progress, as we understand it, never the straight line, always a necessity to break away and destroy, or to sink in and forget.'³⁶

This ancient wisdom is enacted through Mask, antimask, self, and antiself, and a good deal of magico-mystical material which is elaborated in *A Vision* but I must say primarily through Yeats's unstated assumption that language carries within itself a transcendent quality which, when exploded by a poet, creates complexity reverberating into the stretching past and linking it with the present and the anticipatory future. These reverberations mediate the immediate and the transcendent, the particular and the ideal, and every explosion of language is absorbed into an ageless family. After all, language has not only the ability to arouse a conventional image: it has not only the power to establish relational aspects of things referred to; it has not only the ability to evoke secondary associa-

tions; it has also an ideal content that has been so aptly described by Abhinavagupta as 'dhvani,' the power which, when released, creates the resonance of multiplicity gazing towards reality. Yeats uses the vague word 'symbol' though he realises that language has the power to create complexity that goes beyond an individual poet and takes on other meanings from other minds to illuminate the abundance and depth of Nature. Perhaps that is the belief which Yeats expresses in 'The Philosophy of Shelley's Poetry': 'It is only by ancient symbols, by symbols that have numberless meanings besides the one or two the writer lays an emphasis upon, or the half-score he knows of, that any highly subjective art can escape from the barrenness and shallowness of a too conscious arrangement, into the abundance and depth of nature. The poet of essences and pure ideas must seek in the half-lights that glimmer from symbol to symbol as if to the ends of the earth, all that the epic and dramatic poet finds of mystery and shadows in the accidental circumstance of life.'³⁷ Language is not merely an instrument of communication. It is a process of cultural life, perhaps the sole mode of self-knowledge. It links the individual with the community and the great memory. 'All symbolic art,' affirms Yeats in 'Discoveries,' 'should arise out of real belief, and that it cannot do so in this age proves that this age is a road and not a resting-place for the imaginative arts. I can only understand others by myself, and I am certain that there are many who are not moved as they would be by that solitary burning light in the tower of Prince Athanais, because it has not entered into men's prayers nor lighted any through the sacred dark of religious contemplation.'³⁸ Language grows in intensity and complexity in the context of tradition, compelling knowledge and illuminating it. It is rooted in the actual and the transcendent, the endless flux and permanence. This aspect of language is enacted in the later poetry of Yeats. If the early poetry is content with the ritual of evocation, the later poetry enacts the multiplex possibilities of language and through its self-consciousness uniting it with the 'procession,' the great Memory of the essay on 'Magic' so that 'amid the destinies and accidents of the world'³⁹ one gazes at or visualizes the possibilities of truth or wisdom. Language generates a power joining the readers to the 'great mind' and 'great memory,' startling 'us with a wisdom deeper than intellect,'⁴⁰ and inexplicable by any religious dogma because as Yeats insists, 'a single image, that of Christ, Krishna or Buddha (cannot) represent God to the exclusion of other images.'⁴¹ Nothing in art and, incidentally, in history or orthodox religion is ever a final image.

They are begotten from previous images and Yeats emphatically asserts in the essay 'Art and Ideas' 'works of art are always begotten by previous works of art, and every masterpiece becomes the Abraham of a chosen people....The old images, the old emotions, awakened again to overwhelming life, like the gods Heine tells of, by the belief and passion of some new soul....'⁴² Although it might appear at the moment a conquest of the vast design, each image is only an expansion towards it, a release of 'imaginative energy' making one aware of the 'vast worlds moulded by their weight like drops of water.' To consider the symbol or image as autonomous 'uncommitted...having in fact...a life of its own' as Kermode would have it in *Romantic Image*⁴³ is to take away from poetic language the subtlety, complexity and mystery which it shares with the universe and the 'procession.' When language is exploded, when its potential of resonances is released, then poets 'lay their hands upon men's heart-strings' and we cry out 'that imagination is always seeking to remake the world according to the impulses and the patterns in that great Mind, and that great Memory.'⁴⁴ How can the artists fulfil this aim, Yeats asks, 'without becoming the garment of religion as in old times?'⁴⁵ 'Art bids us,' suggests Yeats, 'touch and taste and hear and see the world, and shrinks from what Blake calls mathematic form.'⁴⁶ A mathematic form is a 'measurement,' a 'calculation,' a 'point of view' something that was Whistler's weakness: Whistler had failed to enact his symbols in the 'procession' because he was critical, 'we are but critics, or but half create.'⁴⁷

Despite Kermode's committing Yeats to a certain type of *symbolisme* by basing himself on a half quoted sentence from *The Symbolism of Poetry* ('you cannot give a body to something that moves beyond the senses, unless your words are as subtle, as complex, as full of mysterious life, as the body of a flower or of a women'), I agree with Engelberg when he says in *The Vast Design* that there is one distinction between Yeats and Imagism and *symbolisme*: 'Yeats conceived of the symbol or the image as "heraldic" or, as Pater was fond of saying, "hieratic,"'⁴⁸ It is true '*symbolisme* moved towards a coalescing symbol' though I doubt whether Yeats 'moved away from an exfoliating one.'⁴⁹ Yeats's image or symbol is expansive, generating a vitality that rises from the actual, the real object, to 'the possible unities, that 'themselves seem without number.'⁵⁰ In 'The Symbolism of Poetry' Yeats says: 'the soul moves among symbols and unfolds in symbols when trance, or madness, or deep meditation has withdrawn it from every impulse but its own. "I then

ow", wrote Gérard de Nerval of his madness, 'vaguely drifting into form, plastic images of antiquity, which outlined themselves, became definite, and seemed to represent symbols of which I only seized the idea with difficulty.' In an earlier time he would have been of that multitude whose soul's austerity withdrew, even more perfectly than madness could withdraw his soul, from hope and memory, from desire and regret, that they might reveal those processions of symbols that men bow to before altars, and woo with incense and offerings.⁵¹ What language releases is not private or arbitrary but the multitude within a 'received' tradition, 'ideas mingled with emotion,' promising a revelation of the secret of the 'sacred book.' Of course Yeats warns as early as 1908 (in a note to *The Wind Among the Reeds* in the *Collected Works*) against over-indulgence in symbols for their own sake for they were always in danger of 'reckless obscurity,' but when articulated by him 'who has the secret' forgotten resonances are generated affirming and reaffirming the wisdom of the world.

It is this enactment of the expansive quality of the image or symbol that Yeats yearns for rather than what Stauffer suggests in *The Golden Nightingale* 'demand for compression, for marmorean stillness, for lyrical stasis.'⁵² In fact, Yeats's images sustained by 'wavering, meditative, organic rhythms, which are the embodiment of the imagination, that neither desires nor hates, because it has done with time, and only wishes to gaze at reality, some beauty,' are 'overflowing with turbulent energy,' are expansive and spatial, concurrently linking the moment with the past and throbbing towards the endless future. That is why 'the patterns of the tapestry' Yeats weaves with the images are inexhaustible.⁵³ Take for instance the 'swan' image which Stauffer has worked out with great insight from the early poem 'The Withering of the Boughs' through 'The Wild Swans at Coole', 'Nineteen Hundred and Nineteen', 'Leda and the Swan', 'Among School Children', 'The Tower', to 'Coole and Ballylee, 1931.' Every time this particular image is enacted it opens a new and richer expansiveness. From an object of the faery land with a secret smile it expands into the 'mysterious' creatures of 'The Wild Swans.' The 'procession' has begun to unfold its complexity. 'The great broken rings' have revealed an energy which is only a potential in 'swans fly round.' And this energy is carried in to

Some moralist or mythological poet
Compares the solitary soul to a swan

of 'Nineteen Hundred and Nineteen', while reminding us of the swans at Coole Park contrasting unaging eternity with time-tyrannised human experience:

Unwearied still, lover by lover,
They paddle in the cold
Companionable streams or climb the air;
Their hearts have not grown old;
Passion or conquest, wander where they will,
Attend upon them still. (C.P., p. 147).

This immunity from time adds an overtone to

The swan has leaped into the desolate heaven (C.P., p. 235).

weaving an intricate pattern of the stormy night of civilisation. The timeless dimension that the image enacts is recaptured in Zeus as a swan in 'Leda and the Swan' linking men and gods and the process of history:

A shudder in the loins engenders there
The broken wall, the burning roof and tower
And Agamemnon dead. (C.P., p. 241).

What a complex world is exploded and this complexity is further recaptured in 'Coole and Ballylee' in the lines about the 'sudden thunder of the mounting swan':

Another emblem there! That stormy white
But seems a concentration of the sky;
And, like the soul, it sails into the sight
And in the morning's gone, no man knows why;
And is so lovely that fit sets to right
What knowledge or its lack had set awry,
So arrogantly pure, a child might think
It can be murdered with a spot of ink. (C.P., pp. 275-66).

till one gets the full meaning of Yeats's lament for the passing of Romantic poetry:

But all is changed, that high horse riderless,
Though mounted in that saddle Homer rode
Where the swan drifts upon a darkening flood.

There are many more reverberations that are generated; many more numberless unities and patterns. Take, for instance, the articulation of Homer. In 'Vacillations' the heart gives a reply to the soul:

Soul: Look on that fire, salvation walks within.

Heart: What theme had Homer but original sin? (*C.P.*, p. 282).

And he bids farewell to Von Hügel with, 'Homer is my example and his unchristened heart.' The swan has become an image of passionate experience releasing a 'dhvani' inter-connecting pride, solitariness, inspiration, arrogant purity and multiplex auxiliary motifs both complimentary and opposed. Homer and Helen and Helen's beauty inseparable from Maude Gonne's. All are interwoven into living experience. The immediate and the personal are transfigured into the impersonal creating a design which is analogous to the great design: 'The painter, the mosaic worker, the worker in gold and silver, the illuminator of sacred books, were almost impersonal, almost perhaps without the consciousness of individual design, absorbed in their subject matter and that the vision of a whole people. They could copy out of old Gospel books those pictures that seemed as sacred as the text, and yet weave all into a vast design, the work of many that seemed the work of one, that made building, picture, pattern, metal-work of rail and lamp seem but a single image.'¹ Man can participate in truth, continually seek it in a hundred thousand ways, embody it in illuminating analogues but, as Yeats said to Lady Elizabeth Pelham a few days before he died, 'He (man) cannot know it.' He is, like the Chinamen in 'Lapis Lazuli,' always on the ascent, always expanding towards reality, always hovering like the golden bird over the world 'spread over time, past, present, and to come.'

¹ *Essays and Introductions*, hereafter *E.I.*, (London, 1961), pp. 201-2.

² *The Letters of W.B. Yeats*, ed. Allan Wade. (London, 1954), p. 263.

³ Leonard E. Nathan, *The Tragic Drama of William Butler Yeats*. (Columbia University, 1965), p. 5.

⁴ *Autobiographies*, (London, 1956), p. 71.

⁵ *Mythologies*, (London, 1962), p. 138.

⁶ *Four Plays for Dancers*, (London, 1921), p. 106.

⁷ *Letters to the New Island*, ed. Horace Reynolds, (Harvard University Press, 1934), p. 174.

⁸ 'The Philosophy of Shelley's Poetry,' *E.I.*, p. 65.

⁹ 'Symbolism in Painting,' *Ibid.*, p. 151.

¹⁰ 'The Celtic Element in Literature,' *Ibid.*, p. 182.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 179.

- 12 *The Works of William Blake, I*, (1893), Eds. Edwin Ellis and William Butler Yeats, p. 282.
- 13 'Symbolism in Painting,' *E.I.*, p. 150.
- 14 *Ibid.*, p. 50.
- 15 *Ibid.*, pp. 161-62.
- 16 *Ibid.*, p. 197.
- 17 *Ibid.*, p. 195.
- 18 'The Autumn of the Body,' *Ibid.*, p. 193.
- 19 'Per Amica Silentia Lunae,' *Mythologies*, p. 340.
- 20 Introduction to *Fighting the Waves in Wheels and Butterflies*, 1934, p. 65. Or *Explorations*, p. 374.
- 21 *In Excited Reverie: A Centenary Tribute, W. B. Yeats 1865-1939*, eds. A. Norman Jeffares and K. G. W. Cross, (London, 1965), p. 76.
- 22 *Diary in Explorations*, (London, 1962), pp. 251-53.
- 23 Richard Ellmann, 'Yeats without analogue,' *Kenyon Review*, Winter 1964, pp. 30-47. I am indebted to Ellmann's other two books, *The Man and the Mask*, and *The Identity of Yeats*, both Faber and Faber, London.
- 24 *A Vision*, (London, 1937).
- 25 *The Works of William Blake*, op. cit., I, p. 242.
- 26 'A General Introduction for My Work,' *E.I.*, pp. 509-10.
- 27 A. G. Stock: *W. B. Yeats, His Poetry and Thought*, (Cambridge, 1964), paperback, p. 38.
- 28 *Engelberg*, op. cit., p. 88.
- 29 'The Tragic Theatre,' *E.I.*, p. 245.
- 30 *Ibid.*, p. 287.
- 31 *Explorations*, p. 331.
- 32 *Mythologies*, p. 341.
- 33 *Ibid.*, p. 321.
- 34 'On the Boiler,' *Explorations*, pp. 444-52.
- 35 'Discoveries,' *E.I.*, p. 288.
- 36 Introduction to *The Cat and the Moon* in *Explorations*, p. 403.
- 37 *E.I.*, p. 87.
- 38 *Ibid.*, pp. 294.
- 39 'The Symbolism of Poetry,' *Ibid.*, p.
- 40 'Louis Lambert,' *Ibid.*, p. 446.
- 41 'The Indian Monk,' *Ibid.*, p. 433.
- 42 *Ibid.*, p. 352.
- 43 Frank Kermode, *Romantic Image*, (London, 1957), pp. 55-6.
- 44 'Magic,' *E.I.*, p. 52.
- 45 'The Symbolism of Poetry,' *Ibid.*, p. 163.
- 46 'Discoveries,' *Ibid.*, p. 292.
- 47 'Ego Dominus Tuus,' in *Mythologies*, p. 321.
- 48 Edward Engelberg, *The Vast Design*, (Toronto, 1964), p. 106.
- 49 *Ibid.*, p. 112.
- 50 *Autobiographies*, p. 226.
- 51 *E.I.*, p. 162.

nald A. Stauffer: *The Golden Nightingale*, (Macmillan, New York, 1949), pp.

G. Stock, op. cit., p. 194.

Vision, 1937, pp. 279-80.

The University of Utrecht is publishing two very interesting series of literary studies. The first series, *Studia Litteraria Rheno-Traiectina*, offers to the public the result of researches conducted by the Institute for Comparative Literature. The second, *Utrechtse Publikaties Voor Algemene Literatuurwetenschap* (Studies in General Literature) brings out studies in literary criticism. Both series maintain a high standard of scholarship and their approach is broad and embracing; the studies are placed in the wider context of European literature.

Of the first series, we have received three volumes which we shall briefly review.

Kamerbeeck Jr., J., *Albert Verwey en het Nieuwe Classicisme* (1966) and *De poëzie van J. C. Bloem in Europees perspectief* (1967).

De Deugd, C. *Het Metafysisch Grondpatroon van het Romantische Literaire Denken* (1966).

de Jong, E. *Herman Heijermans en de vernieuwing van het Europees drama* (1967).

Corstius, J. C. Brandt. *Het poëtisch programma van Tachtig: Een vergelijkende studie* (1968).

All published by Utrecht University.

Volume 9 / J. Kamerbeeck Jr., *Albert Verwey en het Nieuwe Classicisme* (Albert Verwey and the New Classicism).

In 1913, the Dutch poet, Albert Verwey, published in his review *De Beweging* (The Movement) an article on *The Direction of Contemporary Poetry*. Dutch poetry had joined the Movement of the Eighties and had adopted the new orientation given by French symbolism. It had wholeheartedly supported the condemnation of rhetoric in particular. By 1913, a reaction had set in. The symbolist ideal of pure creation which made of the poet a demiurge independent of tradition and community, was questioned. The problem was: can the poet create by his own genius alone the adequate form of his poem or has he also to rely on the poetic experience of both tradition and community? It was "a quarrel of form," in which the poet's claim to rely on his genius alone was condemned as a dream to transcend the limitations of the human condition. Verwey deprecated the passive art of

"subjective sensation" and advocated a more active "spiritual" art, being thereby in harmony with Charles Maurras who condemned the romantics and symbolists for their feminine sensitivity and their passivity. A most interesting suggestion of Verwey deserves attention: "spiritual" art would manifest its victory over passive impressionism by the triumph of the sentence over the word. The word, in isolation, reflects the life of the senses and of the nerves; the sentence, the deeper unity of the mind. Verwey's vision of the future of Dutch poetry was corroborated by facts.

Volume 10 / C. De Deugd, *Het Metafysisch Grondpatroon van het Romantische Literaire Denken* (The Metaphysical Pattern of Literary Romantic Thinking).

Romanticism is essentially a yearning for freedom. The romantic poet rejects any law which does not issue either from the poet himself or from the poetic work. Unlike neo-classicism which aimed at imitating nature, romanticism refuses to submit to any model and aspires at creating a new world. Hence, the vital importance of poetry. Neo-classicism saw in poetry a mere adornment of life; romanticism sees in poetry life itself, a life lived in a superhuman world, beyond empirical reality. Hence, the poet is a priest and mediator between the visible and the invisible, a seer and a prophet. Poetry itself is a divine function, it gives shape to

Truth, it is the true religion, conferring on the poet the "charisma" of divine rapture. Poetry has magical powers: it penetrates into the invisible world and can create evocations of it.

The above summary in its bareness is unable to give even a faint idea of the richness of the author's erudition and of his remarkable power of analysis. The whole range of Western Romanticism is scrutinized and interpreted. In the second part of his book the author tries to define the various philosophical expressions of romantic idealism and, then, illustrates them in the poetry of Keats, Wordsworth, Shelley, in the philosophy of Joubert and Solger, and in the works of Poe.

Finally, in a third part, the author exposes Bilderdijk's extreme romanticism and shows how the romantic poet and the Calvinistic bourgeois live in him side by side, holding contradictory views without any effort towards internal harmony.

Volume 11 / E. de Jong, *Herman Heijermans en de vernieuwing van het Europese drama* (Herman Heijermans and the Renewal of European Drama).

With Ibsen, Hauptmann, Maeterlinck and Strindberg European drama began to abandon the traditional form of development-drama to enter into a new phase, that of the 'static' drama. Chekhov gave to 'static' drama its definite form. Heijermans who had written a few

traditional plays excelled in the 'static' drama in which the characters either make vain efforts to extricate themselves from a situation or accept a permanent situation. Thornton Wilder, Sartre, and Brecht also experimented in the 'static' drama, thus continuing the work of Heijermans. The traditional drama finds it easier to captivate the audience's attention by describing a developing situation. In order to compensate for the lack of development, the 'static' drama has recourse to contrast-situations. In this Heijermans is very skilful and has been followed by Brecht.

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Of the second series, we have received two volumes:

Volume 10 / J. Kamerbeek Jr., *De Poezie van J.C. Bloem in Europese perspectief* (The poetry of J.C. Bloom in European perspective).

J.C. Bloom (1887-1966) belongs to the new-classical current of European literature. A great affinity exists between Bloom's poetry and that of Moréas and Housman. Baudelaire had been for Bloom a source of inspiration. The author concludes his book by some interesting remarks on the echo found in Bloom's poetical outlook of some aspects of the thought of Heidegger and Sartre.

Volume 11 / J.C. Brandt Corstius, *Het poetisch programma van Tachtig. Een vergelijkende studie* (The Poetical Programme of the Eighties; A comparative study).

Symbolist poets, in order to defend their conception of poetry, wrote essays which were meant to outline their programme and often became manifestos of the new school. Such was the introduction written in 1882 by Willem Kloos to the verses of Jacques Perk. For Kloos, literary history runs a cyclic course determined by fixed laws. Although his approach is positivistic, Kloos does not belong to the Tainian tradition. For him, psychology must play a central role in literary criticism. Not in order to investigate, as in Hennequin, the various conditions which generate literary phenomena, but in order to obtain a literary evaluation experimentally. The poem being a verbal token of the poet's soul, its capacity to establish a communication between the poet and the reader depends on the active reaction of the reader under the effect of the verbal and prosodic stimuli of the poem. In other words, the reader must join in the act of poetic creation. Resuming the romantic definition of poetry as "imaginative passion," Kloos divests it from its idealistic undertones. Kloos does not believe in the social or prophetic mission of the poet. Creative imagination is the faculty which enables the poet to express his emotions and sensations without any further social or

mystical implication. Poetry is for the poet the fulness of life and, for the reader, an invitation to share in it.

—R. ANTOINE, S.J.

II

C. L. Wrenn's *monograph* is important for at least one reason: it has come out from the Modern Humanities Research Association, England. Time was—not too long ago—when British universities would not even hear about Comparative Literature, let alone accept it as a separate academic discipline. Now, in 1968, an English professor is delivering his presidential Address on 'The Idea of Comparative Literature'! Comparatists all over the world have every reason to be happy.

If by choosing to love Comparative Literature Professor Wrenn has moved away from the academic tradition of his country, he has, on the other hand, shown his obvious affiliation with the British School of Comparative Literature, however small and insecure, by making Aesthetics the *modus operandi* of this particular discipline in line with Professor Wilkinson. About this 'British School' Professor Remak has been particularly critical in his 'Comparative Literature at the Cross Roads: Diagnosis, Therapy,

and Prognosis'. (See *Yearbook of Comparative and General Literature*, IX, p. 14). But I do not fully agree with him when he says, 'Comparative Literature in England is happily disorganized, practiced eclectically, academically homeless, little interested in self-definition and theory, and largely a matter for the individual concerned.' Professor Wrenn, for instance, is most certainly interested in self-definitions and theories; whether one likes his theories or not is completely another matter.

Professor Wrenn's aesthetic theories on Comparative Literature, or, if you will, his theories of Comparative Literature based on aesthetics, clash headlong with the French School of this discipline, where, in spite of Monsieur Etiemble's conscientious attempts to internationalize French scholarship, things still look frightfully provincial and, for good or bad, unmistakably in-bred. The French have always followed what has been technically termed the 'vertical method in Comparative Literature', where study of literature follows a straight, almost unilinear path across centuries examining, in most cases, different types of literary influences historically. Mr. Wrenn, on the other hand, is in favour of the 'horizontal' school where one does not study Comparative Literature merely historically. This school, in which the methodological approach is mostly aesthetic in spirit and not completely historical, is prac-

Wrenn, C. L. *The Idea of Comparative Literature* (Leeds, 1968).

tised, as we all know, in most of the American universities today. Here at Jadavpur we are, I suppose, gradually working out an intermediate methodology both on the horizontal and the vertical planes, which might be called the 'diagonal' method of Comparative Literature.

The major criterion that Mr. Wrenn offers for the study of Comparative Literature, the Ciceronian *Humanitas* as he has called it,—“It is this *humanitas* in its aesthetic and pleasurable manifestations which is the true *differentia* which distinguishes literature from other writings or recitations”,—is peripherally similar with the theory of ‘Rasa’ in Sanskrit aesthetics. So when he suggests that study of Comparative Literature in the West should confine itself to the boundaries of Europe, he runs the risk of overlooking the implications of some of his own observations, and, more, of denying a whole body of scholarship which, over several decades, has been devoted, profitably enough, to the study of cross-fertilization of the Western Literature with the Eastern.

His observations on the problems of translation are particularly encouraging. Categorically, and quite justifiably, he has dismissed two popular misconceptions that Comparative Literature cannot be studied through translation, and that a translator should busy himself only with his task of producing word-by-word literal renderings of

a literary piece from one language to another. To illustrate his point that a translator should be concerned mostly with the spirit of what he is doing, he comes out with a very interesting observation on the achievement of Constance Garnett. She, for instance, ‘had a limited knowledge of Russian from the point of view of strict accuracy, yet conveying the spirit and style of the classical Russian novelists she has not been superseded by more exact scholars in many ways. She could confuse *slivki* ‘cream’ with the word *slivy* meaning ‘plums,’ so that in Russia it appeared that the familiar ‘strawberries and cream’ were replaced by ‘strawberries with little plums’. But her translations of Dostoevsky remain the best for the general reader.’ He similarly points out, that “Edward Fitzgerald, having only a limited knowledge of the Persian of Omar and its background, could make a universally appealing set of English verses only by courtesy termed translation.” The term he has coined for this particular kind of translation is ‘Metatranslation’ (in conjunction with Metalinguistics)—perhaps the only technical term he has allowed himself to use in his whole monograph.

We are also grateful to Mr. Wrenn for warning us against too much scientism in the study of Comparative Literature, and for reminding us that the final appeal of literature is, after all, subjective, the essence of which no amount of

scientific spading can really unravel. But then almost immediately he moves over in a different direction, and points out that comparative study of contemporary literature is 'like studying a language purely synchronically.' There is no doubt that studies of ancient literature, so conveniently distant and so well-outlined in space, offer us a sense of perspective which we are bound to miss in contemporary literature looming large before our vision. Yet, the knowledge of the 'spirit' of a particular author or a literary movement which Mr. Wrenn has unequivocally made the true test for a study of Comparative Literature is certainly not incompatible with our taking interest in contemporary authors.

When Professor Wrenn writes about the abuses of 'crude nationalism' in certain schools of Comparative Literature, we readily agree with him. Yet when, to substantiate his point, he suggests that a Vyachselv Ivanov did some of his best work as an emigre, and that both Dostoevsky and Chekhov had periods of great productivity away from home, we begin to feel that he is perhaps over-simplifying the issue. But his discussion, in this connection, of Pasternak's *Doctor Zhivago* is particularly rewarding. He says at one place, and quite commendably, "Pasternak's famous and notorious novel *Doctor Zhivago* is particularly worthy of attention by the student of Comparative Literature, though almost contemporary. For its

reception and influence may illuminate the problem of nationalism and ideology as literary forces," and, at another, equally correctly, "Its leading characters, Zhivago and Lara are in truth really facets of Pasternak's own personality. It is the moving picture of the evil effects of the Bolshevik revolution in its aftermath and the blurring of its ideal by human weakness that made so strong an appeal in the West as of a powerful attack on Marxist-Leninism, despite its author's loving sympathy for the Russian people and his patriotism. As literature the novel was scarcely considered."

As a corollary to nationalistic literature, and the problems connected with it, he has referred to another kind of literature which he has called 'hybrid.' Mentioning Rabindranath Tagore glancingly as a Bengali author who wrote with equal effectiveness in Bengali and English, yet in a literary style and tone very different from English, Mr. Wrenn has asked graduate students to stay away from this rather 'complex' subject. This is a field for the specialists, he says. He is right.

Begun with the famous Coleridgean dictum, 'The immediate object of poetry is pleasure, not truth', this monograph ends with an extract from a famous letter by John Keats: 'What the imagination seizes as beauty must be truth, whether it existed in the mind before

or not.' So, pleasure in Mr. Wrenn's aesthetics is not an end in itself. That his Presidential address on Comparative Literature has unveiled a few truisms on this discipline there is very little doubt. This is a delightful little monograph, in very British Style.

—Pranabendu Dasgupta

is number of JJCL we have dedicated to Baudelaire in memory of
centenary of his death. This part of India, we felt, owed at least
much to the Paris poet.

Did Baudelaire ever reach the shores of India? Apparently, no one
sure. We only know that on June 9 in 1841, soon after he became
dependent of his family, Baudelaire embarked on his first and
only sea voyage, and that the destination of the boat was the port of
Calcutta. It is also on record that in September of that year the boat
did make a long unscheduled stop at the island of Mauritius, a British
colony in the Indian ocean. Pascal Pia, in his excellent book on Baudelaire, states that the poet visited the isle of Bourbon next month, and
then went on and completed the voyage as far as India. Buddhadeva
Bose, however, in the appendix of his Bengali translation of *Fleurs du mal*, says that the French poet came only up to the island of Reunion,
west of Madagascar, when the lure of Paris finally won over his longing
for the Orient. He is supposed to have taken thence a homebound boat
and so never came to India. Baudelaire on his part loved to talk to his
friends about Calcutta which, he claimed, he had actually visited, and
shortly before his death he also expressed a desire of composing a poem
on India.

Had he been in Calcutta in 1841, he might by chance have come
across another unhappy though slightly younger Bengali Christian poet,
Michael Madhusudan Dutt (1824-1873), who was destined to become
the first innovator of modern Bengali poetry, but who in the forties of
the century was merely dreaming how

To cross the vast Atlantic wave
For glory, or a nameless grave.

About the time when Banville, Leconte de Lisle, Mérimée, Sainte Beuve
and others were signing petitions urging the French Ministry of Public
Education to pay the expenses of poor, dying Baudelaire incurred at the
hydrotherapeutic clinic in Paris, the Bengali poet also was in France in

utter destitution, composing the first Bengali sonnets and desperately penning letters home to a generous friend: 'I tell my wife that when I get back to Calcutta you will give me a little room in your house and a lot of rice to keep body and soul together.' Baudelaire and Madhusudan never met, and would not have understood each other had any meeting taken place.

But did Baudelaire meet his delicate Malabar girl of heady haunch in India or in the British colony of Mauritius or Reunion? Almost successfully we tempted a young friend, now living in Paris, to write on this episode in Baudelaire's life for this number of *JJCL*.

The three articles published here on Baudelaire's impact on Bengali, English, and German literatures were read at Departmental seminars. The tentative checklist of Bengali critical articles on and translations from the poet will indicate how Baudelaire has been much more than an important western poet for an influential group of Bengali writers and readers.

II

Joyce, Kafka & Socialist Realism:

Professor Sigfrid Hoefort of the University of Waterloo reports in *James Joyce Quarterly*, V, 2 (Winter 1968), that on the occasion of Kafka's 80th birthday, an International Conference was held, in May 1963, in Liblice near Prague. Many Marxist critics and scholars, attending the conference, recommended that Kafka should be rehabilitated in the Socialist countries. Ernst Fischer, an Austrian Marxist, demanded that a 'permanent entry permit' should be granted to Kafka, Joyce, and Proust. The representatives of German Democratic Republic, however, vehemently opposed the proposal. Party leader Alfred Kurella "attacked those who had defended Kafka and Joyce, and accused them of having taken a stand that was diametrically opposed to proper Marxist analysis." (c.f. *Sonntag*, No. 31, 1963).

William B. Edgerton, Professor of Slavic Languages and Literatures at Indiana University, informs the readers of *JJQ*, V, 2, that James Joyce is more or less ignored in the Soviet Union. Available translations in Russian are: a. Fragments of *Ulysses* (1925); b. *Dubliners* in abridged version (1927); c. some poetry of Joyce in an anthology (1935-37); and d. Chapters from *Ulysses* in a periodical called *Internatsional'naiia literatura* (1935-37). *Short Literary Encyclopedia*, II (Moscow, 1964) comments: "The writer's formalistic experimentation has given him a position as one of the masters of modernistic literature in its most reactionary manifestations."

Studies in Czechoslovakia:

ly *New Orient*, in English, which is an excellent journal on the and ancient cultures of Asia and Africa, is edited by Professor Vavitel and an Editorial Board of 8 scholars. The journal is al by the Publishing House of the Czechoslovak Academy of , Prague. The first three numbers of 1968 include among the following articles on Indian literature: (1) "The Indian tradition: Selected Readings" selected and translated by S. H. an, V. N. Misra and L. Nathan; (2) "The Rise of the Modern in Urdu" by Ralph Russell; as well as a translation of a short by Kamaleswar, a Hindi writer.

Sanskrit scholar and Hindi writer shree V. N. Misra of Washington ty, U.S.A., reports in Vol. VIII, 1, of *New Orient* on a new ent in improving translation of Indian poetry. A team of a poet, a Sanskrit scholar, and an American poet was set up who suitable poems for translation. The poems were then put on a or finding an idea of corresponding metrics. Then a line for line lases of the poems were made, and notes on imagery, rhyming pat- and the poet's genius were prepared. The American poet then to English the entire spirit and semantic intricacies of the originals. and versions were approved by the team after removing from the tions all discrepancies. Shree Misra reports that the experiment n "very successful insofar as it has tried to make of an alien poetry en experience something to be shared and enjoyed by all." annual subscription for the *New Orient* is \$4.00 or the equivalent currency.

word

re excerpts from an article on the comparative study of literature ank W. Chandler (1873-1947). Written in 1910, the article has rprinted in number 15 of *YJCL* (1966) from *University Studies*, ty of Cincinnati (Nov.-Dec., 1910). The author was the first Professor of Comparative Literature of that University.

If there be comparative anatomy, comparative embryology, politics, philology and phonology, why not comparative literature, as well?... As the new nations of Europe grew into separate organisms, and developed national literatures, the comparative

method was often restricted in its application to works composed in a single language. But more and more, as time went on, international relationships claimed recognition. It was perceived that links of similarity and causality bind together works in different tongues and of different ages. . . . But the notion of literature as a whole is by no means incompatible with the notion of the separate literatures as national. Indeed, it is only as we think of the whole body of literary work that we may truly perceive national differentia. And in discovering such differentia will lie part of the duty of the student of comparative literature. . . . There are two schools in this study— one, the historical, the other, the critical. With the critical school, questions of value are supreme; with the historical school, questions of environment, influence, and evolution.

After explaining why he considers that history and criticism should combine in the study of Comparative Literature, Professor Chandler goes on to suggest the activities in which the student of Comparative Literature may profitably engage:

Eight pathways at the very least, then, the student of comparative literature may follow. He may study—themes, types, environments, origins, influences, movements, the theory of literary art, and the theory of literary growth.

We would recommend this lucid exposition of the aims and method of the study of Comparative Literature to all students of this discipline. This invitation is extended to the sceptics as well.

V

Attention, teachers of Comparative Literature!

“Ideally (the teacher) of comparative literature must strive, in all modesty and patience, to acquire three tangible possessions; first and most essential, acquaintance with the significant works of general literature; second, acquaintance with the historical development of various national literatures, their principal points of contact one with another, their peculiar qualities and limitations; and, third, acquaintance with the views of the principal authorities concerning such matters,—a knowledge, in others words, of the state of scholarship in this field, to the end that the territory already surveyed may be occupied, and that what remains to be explored may be entered upon. Those who endeavor to acquire these possessions may be either investigators or organizers. The organizers

attention upon the territory already conquered, seeking to order it systematically. The investigators, on the other hand, turn attention upon the territory as yet unexplored, seeking to establish relationships in this domain, striving to bring to light new facts, preparing the way for the organizers who will follow."

(From the same article by F. W. Chandler)

Here in India, Comparative Literature is still an odd name in some circles, though some prominent members of those august circles are already showing signs of sympathy in their own ways to the efforts in support of this 'new' discipline. We feel confident that by some of our universities would need the services of teachers of Comparative Literature. Prospective teachers may keep Professor Chandler's advice in mind.

VI

Reprints are now available of *Yearbook of Comparative and General Literature* (Volumes I to XI) from Russell & Russell, Publishers, 122 West 42nd Street, New York, N.Y. 10017. Each volume contains c. 180 pages, clothbound, and is offered at \$7.50.

VII

SLA-4:

Mouton & Co., The Hague & Paris, has published in 2 volumes *Proceedings of the IVth Congress of the International Comparative Literature Association*. Edited by Francois Jost, Vol. I is devoted to 'Nationalism and Cosmopolitanism in Literature,' and Vol. II to 'Definition and Illustration of Literary Terms Related to the Notion of Imitation, Originality and Influence.' There were 373 participants who came to attend the Congress from 174 universities, institutions, and associations, representing 35 countries. As we reported in Vol. 5 of *JCL*, the Congress was held at Fribourg, Switzerland. Literature of the Far East, unfortunately, received very limited attention.

VIII

New Journals of particular interest to the student of Comparative Literature:

1. *Arcadia*. Eds. Horst Rüdiger, Roger Bauer, Erik Lunding, and Oskar Seidlin. Published by Walter de Gruyter, Berlin. Three times a year. DM 42.00 per year.

2. *Cahiers Algériens de Littérature Comparée*. Section de Littérature Comparée. Faculté des Lettres et Sciences Humaines, Université d'Alger, Algiers, Algeria.
3. *Renaissance Quarterly*. Published by the Renaissance Society of America. Ed. Elizabeth Story Donno (Columbia University).
4. *Comparative Drama*. Sponsored by the Department of English, Western Michigan University. Quarterly.
5. *Modern International Drama*. Eds. Anthony M. Pasquariello and George E. Wellwarth. Pennsylvania State University. Semiannual.
6. *Novel, A Forum on Fiction*. Eds. A. Bloom, Mark Spilka, and Park Honan. Department of English, Brown University, U.S.A. Three times a year.
7. *Genre*. Eds. Donald E. Billiar, Edward F. Heuston, and Robert L. Vales. Department of English, University of Illinois, Chicago Circle. Quarterly.
8. *Conradiana*. Department of English, University of Maryland, College Park, Md. 20740, U.S.A. (The journal will be interested in "every aspect and phase of the life and work of Joseph Conrad.") Three times a year.
9. *Westerly*. University of Western Australia Press.
(From what we have read in a review in the *New Orient*, it appears that *Westerly: A Quarterly Review* should be on the desk of the serious students and scholars of Comparative Literature. The special October (1966) issue of this journal is devoted exclusively to Indonesia. "The concentration of concrete facts about Indonesian literature, extracts from translations, and articles on the literature and language of Indonesia afford the possibility of comparing the state of Indonesian literature with the situation prevailing in other, including non-oriental, spheres of literature.")

IX

On Translation:

- (a) "Every language should be understood not only as a set of verbal and syntactic forms, but rather as a system of ideas and patterns of thought peculiar to that language.... Translation is the effort of rebuilding a similar texture of thought by means of another language, i.e. by means of another set of symbols, different not only

the form of each lexical and syntactical unit, but rather—which much more important—in the meanings of all those units. Even the best translation implies a transfiguration of the talents. . . . Translation is, therefore, very similar to the task of constructing a sewing machine out of parts originally designed for typewriter.”

—Dr. Günther Kandler of Bonn University

The translations of the classics of world literature, such as Tolstoi, Dostoevsky, Flaubert, Maupassant, have mainly influenced English writing precisely because they have been available to the masses. They could never have had this influence if they had only been available to a few, even if only available to the authors who have been influenced by them. It is also the influence on the readers which is important.”

—Methuen and Co. (London)

(From the ‘*Proceedings of the IIIrd Congress of the International Federation of Translators*’ Bad Godesberg, 1959).

K

Dostoevsky in Moscow:

Mal Singh reports from Moscow, in *The Statesman*, that Dostoevsky’s apartment in Leningrad, the St. Petersburg of his days, is going to be fixed “down to the window bolts and hinges, and the door bell. The entrance hall is to be remodelled with 19th century shop signs and period lighting. It was here that Dostoevsky wrote his *Brothers Karamazov*. . . . His grandson, engineer Andrei, is helping an architect complete the apartment by the writer’s 150th birth anniversary in 1971.”

The report adds: “Turgenev’s country house in Spasskoye-Lutovo is also being rebuilt from blueprints, photographs and old men’s memories. Books, furniture, pictures will be arranged as Turgenev had them. Around the house, old estate buildings are being restored and parks and footpaths replanned according to the old layout.”

OUR CONTRIBUTORS

David McCutcheon's paper was presented as a lecture in the Comparative Literature Department at Jadavpur to commemorate Baudelaire's death centenary. Mr. McCutcheon is a teacher in the Department.

Georg Lechner, Director of Max Mueller Bhavan, Calcutta, specialized in medieval French literature and taught French for some time in Munich. He is also interested in avant garde cinema and recently collaborated on a documentary, *Tabla Calcutta*. Dr. Lechner's paper like Mr. McCutcheon's was presented at Jadavpur on the occasion of Baudelaire centenary.

Manabendra Bandyopadhyay's paper, which examines in Bengali the impact of Baudelaire on Bengali poetry, was also presented in the same series. Mr. Bandyopadhyay teaches Comparative Literature at Jadavpur.

Narayan Mukherjee, did his B.A. and M.A. in Comparative Literature at Jadavpur. He is now at Aix-en-Provence for advanced studies in Comparative Literature on a French Government scholarship.

V. Y. Kantak, is Professor and Chairman of English at M.S. University, Baroda. He also takes an active interest in drama production. His paper here was read at a three-day seminar organized in 1965 by the Jadavpur Department of Comparative Literature to commemorate the birth centenary of Yeats.

Amiya Dev, of Jadavpur, specialises in drama.

M. M. Bhalla, Professor and Chairman of English at Rajasthan University, was formerly Head of the English Department at St. Stephen's College, Delhi and is author of many critical studies. He is closely associated with Sangeet Natak Akademi and is a writer in Urdu. The present paper was read at the Yeats seminar at Jadavpur.

Robert Antoine, S.J. is a classical scholar who specializes not merely in Greek and Latin but in Sanskrit as well. He is also a medievalist and is one who at the same time responds sensitively to modern literature. Rev. Antoine teaches Comparative Literature at Jadavpur.

Pranabendu Dasgupta, who also teaches Comparative Literature, specializes in modern drama. Dr. Dasgupta is a poet and edits a poetry magazine in Bengali.